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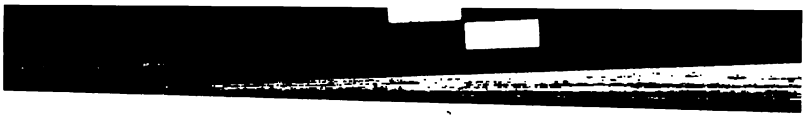






A SHEAF OF STORIES







"'Here,' she said, 'look at this dear little pie. Is n't it cunning?'"

FRONTISPIECE. *See page* 14.

[illegible] STORIES

BY

[illegible] COOLIDGE

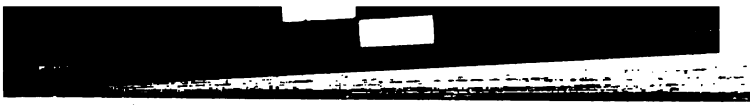
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[illegible]. W. F. KENNEDY

BOSTON
[illegible]TTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1906





Woolsey, S. C.

A SHEAF OF STORIES

BY

SUSAN COOLIDGE

AUTHOR OF "WHAT KATY DID," "WHAT KATY DID AT SCHOOL," "A NEW YEAR'S BARGAIN," ETC.

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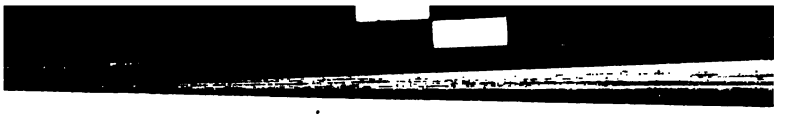
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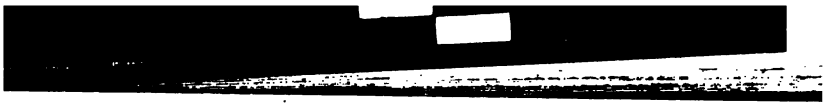
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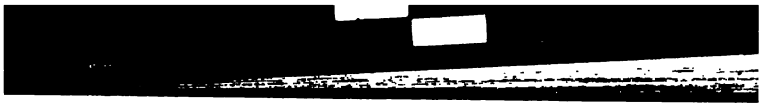
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A THANKSGIVING PIE



A THANKSGIVING PIE

IT was on the day before Thanksgiving that the saucer-pie came into being. Miss Hepzibah made it. All the grown-up pies were done and in the oven. The Indian pudding was mixed and flavored, waiting its turn till all the other things should be drawn out of the oven, and it should be put in to bake slowly all night long, and come out in the morning brown as a chestnut, and spicy as — well, as an old-fashioned Indian pudding. There is nothing else in the world spicy enough to be compared with it.

Rows of loaves, brown and white, stood covered with towels on the shelves of the buttery, which smelt delightfully, and not of fresh bread alone, for in the corner, under a tin pan, was the huge jelly-cake, a miracle of light sponge, and jam, and pink and white frosting. Apple sauce and cran-

berry sauce were simmering over the fire in little kettles. On the window-sill stood the great chicken pie, set out to cool, while beside it to-morrow's turkey lay trussed and ready, its drum-sticks and wings meekly folded over a well-stuffed breast. There was no end to the good things, thought little Dolly. It was as exciting as Thanksgiving Day itself, just to stand by and watch and see, and smell the fragrance of the impending feast.

A morsel of paste remained on the board after the big pies were finished, and at the bottom of the bowl a little strained and lemon-flavored apple sauce. Miss Hepzibah stepped to the dresser and took down a small blue and white saucer. Dolly's eyes grew round as the saucer with expectation when she saw this. To and fro went Miss Hepzibah's roller, and presently the paste had become a smooth, flat sheet, which was laid over the saucer and neatly trimmed about the edges. Then the apple was poured in, covered with another sheet

of paste, three little fork-holes were pricked in the middle, and lastly, "sizz, sizz" went Miss Hepzibah's "jigger," and behold, in one second of time, a pretty scalloped border grew into shape and rounded the pie into perfect beauty. Dolly had been holding her breath during the last of these operations, but now she felt that she must speak or die!

"Is it for me?" she cried. "Oh, Miss Hepsy, is it for me?"

"Wait and see," replied Miss Hepsy. The pie *was* meant for Dolly, but, like many grown persons, Miss Hepzibah enjoyed baffling children and putting them off when they asked questions. She had never had much to do with any child till Dolly came, and did not understand how little hearts set themselves on little things, or how hard it is for little patiences to "wait and see" when they are bidden to do so.

With anxious interest Dolly watched the saucer-pie shoved into the oven. You may be sure that

she managed to be on hand to see it come out. Miss Hepsy had never made a saucer-pie before since Dolly had lived with her. That was almost a year. Dolly was beginning to forget the time that went before — the time when she lived with mamma, and was petted with baby-talk, had treats and surprises, and spent the pennies given her in candy instead of putting them into the missionary box, as Miss Hepsy made her do. Miss Hepzibah meant to be very kind to Dolly, but her sense of duty was strong, and she thought a good deal more of what was good for Dolly's character than of what Dolly happened to be wishing and longing for at the moment. This sometimes led to misunderstandings between them.

Dear little Dolly! Her pink and white fat face was full of anxiety as Miss Hepsy lifted the saucer-pie from the oven and set it on the table to cool.

"Now you 'll tell me if it 's for me, won't you?" she said.

Miss Hepsy relented, and was just going to say "yes," when, unfortunately, somebody knocked at the door. It was little Kitty Blane who knocked. Kitty was the child of a neighbor not quite so well off as Miss Hepzibah was. Mrs. Blane happened just then to be laid up with rheumatism, and Miss Hepsy had promised her a pumpkin pie, which Kitty was now come to fetch. It stood on the table, already packed in a basket with a mould of cranberry jelly, and Miss Hepzibah proceeded to tuck a clean napkin neatly about it.

Suddenly a bright thought struck her. She turned sharp round and seized the saucer-pie.

"Now, Dolly," she said, "I *did* mean this pie for you; but here 's Kitty, you see, whose ma is sick, and who ain't going to have any Thanksgiving at all, none of her folks, nor nothing. Now, you 'll have Aunt Jessie, you know, and Uncle Jim, and Grandma, and all the cousins, and a good dinner and a first-rate time generally; so I think

you'd better give this little pie to Kitty! You'd rather, would n't you? You don't want to feel selfish about it, I'm sure, do you, Dolly?"

Miss Hepzibah thought that to make this little sacrifice would be good for Dolly's character, you see; so she was much disappointed when, instead of cheerfully replying, like a little girl in a book, "Yes, indeed, Miss Hepsy, let Kitty have it," Dolly burst into tears, and sobbed out, "Oh, was it for me? I don't want to give it away. I don't, Miss Hepsy! I don't want to!"

"Dolly!" cried Miss Hepsy, sternly, "I am ashamed of you! Here, Kitty, take the little pie and go. I'm sorry that Dolly should behave so naughty, that I am."

"Oh, please, Miss Hepsy," faltered Kitty, "don't give me Dolly's pie. I'd a great deal rather she had it; indeed I would."

"It is n't hers. It's your pie!" declared Miss Hepsy, with a stamp of her foot. "I never gave it to Dolly at all. There, Kitty, I've put it in

the basket. Go home, now, and tell your ma I'll look in sometime to-morrow, and see how she's getting along."

Kitty cast a sorrowful look at the sobbing Dolly. But it was never of any use to oppose Miss Hepsy, so she took the basket up and went away without another word. She liked little pies very much; but this, she felt, it would be impossible to enjoy, because, while she ate it, she should be thinking of poor Dolly, left behind pieless and tearful.

Arrived at home, she gave Miss Hepzibah's message to her mother, set the pies and the jelly away in a cool place, mended the fire, hung on the kettle for tea, and then sat down on the broad stone doorstep to rest for a little while. The sun was setting, making haste to go to bed, as sleepy suns do on November afternoons. The air was mild, with just a faint bright touch of frost, which seemed to add freshness to it rather than chill. Kitty always liked to watch the sun-

sets, they were so pretty from the kitchen door. All the leafless woods turned into beautiful colors; the pond, which shone in the distance, gleamed golden and still, like a big burnished mirror. Odd, unexplained fragrances came from the forest, as though the ghosts of the dead flowers had come back to haunt the spot. A belated bird hopped by. Above was a dome of pure yellow sky, with here and there a little fleck of crimson cloud drifting over it, like a tiny, rapid boat. Surely no summer evening could be more beautiful. Frost and winter, all unlovely things, seemed just then impossible and a long way off.

Presently Kitty left off looking at the sunset, to watch a small figure which came into view on the road, dodging behind fences, and kicking up dead leaves with a pair of brown little feet. It was a girl about Kitty's own age, a girl with a thin, dark face, tangled hair, and a ragged frock, which only half hid her limbs. Behind her ran

a dog, which barked and snapped at the leaves which the girl kicked up with her toes.

When the girl saw Kitty sitting there, she stopped and looked for a minute as though she would turn and run away. Then she sidled slowly nearer, glancing shyly out of her large black eyes, and not speaking till Kitty spoke.

"Is that your dog?" asked Kitty.

"Yes," said the girl, "he's mine. His name is Spot."

"And what's your name?" was Kitty's next question.

"Dono what't is now. Mother used to call me Nance sometimes."

"But don't they call you Nance any longer?" asked Kitty, surprised.

"No. Nobody don't call me no name at all, only just 'Come here, you,' or 'Get out, you limb!' or something like that."

"Why, what horrid people they must be! I would n't stay any longer with people who called

me names like that," cried Kitty, opening wide her eyes.

"Where would you stay, then?" demanded the girl.

This was a poser!

"I'd — I'd — run away, or — something. I'd go somewhere else," said Kitty.

"Yes, — but where? Nobody wants a tramp-child like me about. 'Most always at nice clean houses like this they drive me away. Once a boy set his dog on me, but Spot was the biggest, and he gin it to 'em, I tell you. Jack, and Spelter Sal, well, they ain't so very kind, I s'pose, but they gin me a meal of vittles whenever they has any theirselves, and I sleep under the tent with 'em; and it's better than outside. 'T ain't so easy as it sounds to go hungry, I can tell you."

"Oh, I *am* so sorry for you!" cried Kitty, with tears in her eyes. "Wait here just a minute, and let me ask mother if I may n't give you some supper. I 'm sure she 'll say yes."

And in she ran, leaving the poor little vagrant at the gate, with Spot jumping and barking at her heels.

"Here," cried she, coming back with a mug and a plate of bread in her hands, "I knew mother'd let me. Here's some bread-and-milk for you, Nance. Sit down on the step and eat it all up. Poor Nance! it's dreadful for you to be so hungry. Why, I never was hungry in my life, — not so hungry that I could n't wait, I mean," she added, correcting herself.

Nance evidently had reached the point of hunger when it was not easy to wait. She attacked the bread-and-milk like one famished. But, half starved as she was, Kitty observed that she stopped every now and then to throw a bit of bread to Spot, who sat on his tail watching with wistful eyes each mouthful that went down his mistress's throat. When Kitty saw this, she ran for more bread, and fed Spot herself. Her tender heart was full of pity for the forlorn creatures;

she longed to help farther, to do more for them. A sudden thought crossed her mind.

"Shall I?" she asked herself. "Yes, I will." And without farther delay she hastened indoors once more, and came back with a happy flush on her cheeks, and in her hand the saucer-pie!

"Here," she said, "look at this dear little pie. Is n't it cunning? Miss Hepsy gave it me for my own, and I'm going to give it to you. I won't give you the saucer, though, because *that* does n't belong to me. Don't touch it till I come back. I'm going to get a knife and some paper to wrap it in."

You should have seen Nance's face as Kitty carefully loosened the edges of the pie, turned it out, and folded it in the paper! I suppose such a treat had never lighted upon the poor little waif before in the whole course of her life. Spot appeared to understand that something of unusual importance was going on, for he stood on his hind-legs, barked wildly, careered about, and



behaved generally like a distracted dog. When the pie was placed in her hands, Nance looked at it silently, and then she looked at Kitty. She did not *say* "Thank you" — I suppose no one had ever taught her to do so, but her eyes made up for the deficiencies of her tongue, and Kitty missed nothing. "Spot! Spot!" called Nance, and, squeezing the precious pie very tightly in her hand, she smiled once more into Kitty's face, and walked away. Kitty watched her go, with a warm, happy feeling at her heart. It was a great deal nicer that poor Nance had the pie than if she had eaten it herself, — this was the thought in her mind when at last she went in and shut the door.

Nance, meanwhile, was making the best of her way toward the gypsy tent, which was a long way off in the woods. She had no idea of keeping the pie till she got there, because then Jack and Spelter Sal would, she knew, take it from her; but she wished to enjoy the pleasure of

possession till the last possible moment. As she walked, she every now and then lifted the parcel to her nose for a rapturous sniff, but she did not undo the paper until nearly a mile was passed, and she and Spot were almost within sight of the tent. Then she sat down under a tree, untied the string, and after feasting her eyes for a moment, raised the pie to her lips, and took a great bite. It was even better than it looked, — the best, the very best thing, Nance thought, that she had ever imagined. "Oh, if it would only last forever, and never be eaten up!" she thought, as she took the second bite.

Now Spot had seated himself also at the same time with Nance, and exactly in front of her. He, too, smelt the pie, and admired its looks. When she took the first mouthful, he writhed himself about, and his tail rapped sharply in the dry leaves beneath him. His mouth watered; his red tongue hung out from his jaws, and waved to and fro suggestingly. At last he gave a short

reminding bark. Nance stopped eating. She held the pie a little way off, and looked first at it and then at Spot.

"Yes," she said at last. "You shall have some, Spotty, 'cause you 're the only friend I 've got. Poor Spotty, dear Spotty, don't wag so — you shall have a bit." She gave a little gasp of renunciation, broke the pie bravely in two, and held the smaller piece out to Spot. It was a large piece — almost half of all that was left! Spot seized it joyfully. Munch — crunch — down his throat it went in large morsels. Munch — crunch — Nance's share was also disappearing. In a very short time there was no pie left — not a crumb; and which of the two who shared the feast enjoyed it the most thoroughly, it would indeed be hard to say.

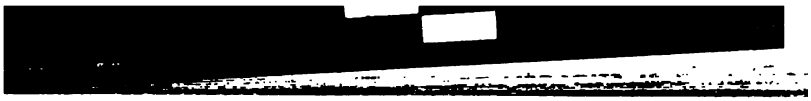
So Dolly, and Kitty, and Nance, and Spot, each and all had a saucer-pie. Were these four pies, then, or was it but one, multiplied and made many by the blessed arithmetical rule called

golden, which consists in giving each to the other? And which of those who gave enjoyed the giving most, think you, — Dolly, who parted with the pie against her will; Kitty, who gave from pity and tenderness of heart; or Nance, who lovingly shared her little all with her dumb and only friend?



HOW ST. VALENTINE REMEMBERED MILLY





HOW ST. VALENTINE REMEMBERED MILLY

IMAGINE a cold, snappy day in February. Frost on window-panes, ice on tree boughs, bright sun twinkling on panes and boughs alike. Three chairs pulled close to the fire, three little girls sitting on the chairs, and three kittens sitting on the laps of the little girls. That makes six of them, you see. So the story begins.

"Won't it be nice?" said one of the six.

"Splendid," said another. "Ever so much nicer than last year."

The third said nothing, but her face grew pink, and she fluttered up and down in her chair as if thinking of something too exciting and too delightful to put into words.

This was Milly. I want you to like her, and I think you will. She was twelve years old, very

small and thin, and very lame. A tiny pair of crutches, with cushioned tops, leaned against her chair. On these she went about the house merrily and contentedly all day long. Everybody liked to hear the sound of Milly's crutches, because it told that Milly was at hand. Grandmamma said there was no music like it to her ears; but I think she must have meant to except Milly's laugh, which was gleeful as a silver bell. As for her face, it always made me think of a white wild violet, it was so fair and pure and transparent, with its innocent, wondering eyes of clear blue; and her temper was as sweet as her face. Do you wonder that people loved her? She lived in an old-fashioned house with her grandfather and grandmother; but at this time I am telling about, she was making a visit at her Uncle Silas's, the first visit which Milly had ever made in her life.

Uncle Silas's house was about ten miles from Grandpapa's. It stood in a large, busy village, which seemed like a city to Milly, who had never

seen anything but the quiet country. But the most delightful part of the visit, she thought, was being among her cousins, whom she had hardly known before. There were quite a number of them, from big Ralph, who counted himself almost a man, to little Tom in his high-chair. But Milly's favorites were the twins, Florry and Dorry, who were almost exactly her own age. What happy times those three did have together! They read story books, they dressed dolls; I cannot tell you half of all they did. Milly had been there four weeks, but it didn't seem four days.

Just now they all were absorbed in a valentine party which was to come off the next day but one. Florry was cutting a big heart out of deep red paper; Dorry, with a pencil in her mouth, was trying to find a rhyme; and Milly, who knew nothing about valentines, sat by, stroking her kitten and admiring the cleverness of the other two.

"See," explained Florry, laying the heart on

the lid of a pasteboard box, "this will go so, on top of the box, and the slit for the valentines *so*. When Ralph comes in, I 'm going to ask him to cut the slit for me."

"And where does the box go?" asked Milly, deeply interested.

"Oh, on the hall table, you know. Then all the boys and girls can drop their valentines in as they go upstairs, and nobody can tell who wrote any of them."

"I wish I could get this right," sighed Dorry. "Do help me, Florry. It 's for Luther Payne, you know, and I 've got as far as

'I only wish, dear Luther,
You 'd promise to be mine.'

"There 's 'valentine,' you see, to go with 'mine,' but I can't find any rhyme for 'Luther.'"

Neither could Dorry. As they were puzzling over it, a sound was heard in the hall, as of some one stamping the snow from his boots.



"There's Ralph," cried Florry; "now he'll cut the slit in the box."

Ralph came in.

"Here's a letter for you, Milly," he said.

"For me!" said Milly. "How funny! I never had a letter before. Oh, yes! there was the letter Aunty wrote asking me to come and see you; but that was to Grandma."

She opened the letter. Her face fell as she read.

"What's the matter?" asked Dorry. "What makes you look so?"

"Grandpapa's sick," answered Milly, in a choked voice. "He's caught cold, and feels badly all over; and, oh dear! I've got to go home."

"Not right away? Not before the party?" cried the others.

Milly nodded. She was too nearly crying to trust herself to speak.

"But, unless Grandpa is very sick, you might

stay till Thursday, surely," said Ralph. He took the letter that Milly held towards him, and read: .

MY PRECIOUS MILLY, — Your dear little letter has just come, and I am so glad that you are well and happy. I am sorry to say that Grandpapa is sick; not dangerously sick, but he has caught a cold, and feels badly all over, he says. All yesterday and all to-day he has stayed in bed; and, though he does n't say anything about it, I can see that he wishes you were at home. Would n't you like to come home, dear, and make the rest of your visit to Aunt Elizabeth at some other time? I am sure it would comfort Grandpapa and set him right up to see you again. Perhaps Uncle Silas could drive you over to-morrow; but I sha'n't tell Grandpapa that I 'm looking for you, for fear that he might be disappointed, in case it should storm or anything should prevent you from coming.

Your loving

GRANDMAMMA.

"Why, you need n't go till Thursday, then," said Florry. "Grandmamma says she won't tell Grandpapa; so he 'll not mind."

"Oh, yes, I must. I must go to-morrow," replied Milly. "Grandpapa gets into such low spirits when he has these colds. I know that Grandma wants me very much."

"But it's too bad," broke in Dora, almost crying; "you never had a valentine in your life, or went to a valentine party; and this is going to be such a nice one. You *must* stay. Think of going home to that forlorn house, Grandpa sick and all, when we're having such fun here."

"I sha'n't enjoy it one bit without you," cried Florry. "Don't go, Milly, don't! Your grandma does n't positively expect you right away, you see. It'll do just as well if you're there on Thursday."

"No, it won't," said Milly, cheerfully. A big tear gathered in the corner of her eye and hopped down her nose, but her voice was quite firm. "Don't feel badly about it, please, for I don't. I could n't enjoy myself a bit if I knew that Grandpa was sick, and wanted me, and I was not there.

It's been too lovely here, and I'm real sorry to go; but, perhaps I can come some time when Grandpapa is well again."

Ralph looked and listened. He knew of the lump in Milly's throat as she uttered these brave words, and understood what a great disappointment it was for her to give up the valentine party. Aunty came in, and was as sorry as the children that Milly must go, though she kissed her and said it was quite right, and that Uncle Silas would drive her over to-morrow as early as he could. Dorry and Florry comforted themselves with promises of future visits. Ralph said nothing. He seemed to be thinking very hard, however; and that evening, when Dorry wanted him, she found his bedroom door locked, and was informed from inside that he was "busy." Ralph busy! What was the world coming to!

Next morning, quite early, he came in with his hat and coat on.

"Milly," he said, stooping over her, "I've got

to go away on business, so I'll say good-bye to you now."

"Oh, sha'n't I see you again? I'm so sorry," replied Milly, putting her white violet face against his rough boy's cheek. "Good-bye, dear Ralph, you've been ever so good to me."

"Good? Stuff and nonsense!" said Ralph, gruffly, and walked away.

"Where *has* Ralphy gone, Mamma?" asked Florry. "I thought only big, grown-up people had 'business.'"

"Ralphy is pretty big," said Mamma, smiling, but she did n't answer Florry's question.

Just then Dorry held up Daisy, the largest and dearest of the kittens, to kiss Milly for "good-bye."

"Oh, yes, Milly," put in Florry, "kiss her; you don't know how beautifully she does it."

Milly, laughing to see "how beautifully Daisy did it," took pussy for a moment, as she sat by the cheerful fire, waiting for the signal to put on her

cloak. Daisy really was a very intelligent puss. Milly's great delight had been to see her "go through her performances," as the children called it. She would sit in the corner at their bidding, make a bow, or "cry," rubbing her eyes with her paws; or, better than all, she would make believe go to sleep in the dolly's crib. Milly thought of these things as she held Daisy's soft cheek against her own, and half wished she could take the little pet with her; meantime the children crowded about her, eager not to lose a moment of her precious company.

Uncle had business too, so it was three o'clock before Milly set off. The little cousins parted with tears and kisses.

"I don't care one bit for the party now," declared Dorry, as she took her last look at the carriage moving on in the distance.

It was a long, cold drive, and the sun was setting just as they drew up at Grandpapa's door. Grandmamma was watching in the window.



When she saw Milly, she nodded and looked overjoyed.

"I was just giving you up, my precious," she said, as she opened the door. "Grandpapa's been looking for you all day. I had to tell him. Run right in and see him, dear. You'll stay the night, Silas?"

"No, mother, I must be getting back. "I'll just step in and see father a minute. Nothing serious, is it?"

"No, I think not. Half of it was fretting after Milly. That child is the very apple of his eye."

Meantime Milly was in Grandpapa's room. When he heard the tap, tap of her crutch, he sat up in bed, looking bright and eager. Such a hug as he gave her!

"Grandpapa's darling! Grandpapa's little flower!" he said, as he kissed her. How glad she was to have come! The disappointment about the party was quite forgotten.

All the evening long she sat by the side of the

bed, telling him and Grandmamma about her visit. It seemed as if Grandpapa could not bear to have her out of his sight. At last Grandmamma interfered, and sent her upstairs so tired and sleepy that she just slipped off her clothes and went to bed as fast as she could. But, after she had said her prayers, and her head was on the pillow, the recollection of her disappointment and of the merry time the others were going to have on the morrow came over her, and she was half inclined to cry.

"I won't. I won't think about it," she said. She did n't, but valentines seemed to run in her head; and all night long she dreamed about a valentine.

When she woke, the sun was streaming into the room. She guessed that it was late, and, as dressing was always a slow process, she got up at once. But, as she put her feet into her slippers, she gave a little start and pulled one out again. Something stiff and crackling was in the slipper.

She looked; it was a note directed to "Miss Milly Meyers," and inside were written these verses:

"Glass slippers, kid slippers, pray what does it matter?
It does n't matter at all.
Your foot, Milly dear, though I don't wish to flatter,
Is just as pretty and small

"As mine was of yore, in the days of the fairies,
When I went all in state to the dance,
With a rat on the box of my coach, and, what rare is,
Mice steeds, full of spirit and prance.

"No fairy help do you need, dear Milly,
With your face so pure and sweet;
And the prince must, indeed, be dull and silly
Who does not kneel at your feet.

"Yours affectionately,
"CINDERELLA."

Milly thought she must be dreaming again, as she sat on the bedside reading these verses. No! she was wide awake. There was the paper in her hand. Was ever anything so strange? She determined to dress as fast as possible, so as to

get downstairs and tell Grandmamma of this wonderful thing.

But lo! when she went to brush her hair, she found another paper wound about the handle of the brush, with these lines:

"Brush your pretty hair,
Hair of sunny gold;
So I brushed mine in
Days of old.

"Yours is quite as soft,
Half as long;
Fit to figure in
Tale or song.

"Brushing day by day,
Some day you may be
Put into a book,
Just like me.

"THE FAIR ONE WITH THE GOLDEN LOCKS."

Milly clasped her hands in bewilderment. The quality of the poetry would have shocked the critics, it is true, but Milly thought she never before had read such beautiful verses. What did



it mean? "Dicky, dear Dicky," she cried to the canary, who hung in the window, "who wrote them? Do tell me."

Dicky twittered by way of answer, and Milly saw that, hanging to the cage by a piece of thread, was a third paper. Another valentine? Yes, there was the address, "Miss Milly Meyers."

"I am not 'blue,'
'T is very true;
But all the same
I do love you.

"I am a prince —
Pray do not wince,
My meaning soon
I will evince.

"I wear a beak
And do not speak,
That I your bower
May safely seek.

"Here do I sit,
And never flit;
But sing all day
For love of it.

"For love of you
I sing and sue;
Then be my own,
Oh! maiden true.

"PRINCE YELLOW BIRD."

Milly dropped into a chair, too much amazed to stand.

"I wonder if there really *are* fairies," she said, "for never, in my whole life, did I hear of anything so queer and so delightful."

Then she took her crutches and limped across the room to wash her hands. But when she lifted the lid off the soap-tray, she gave a little jump, for there, on the soap, lay another note. This was what it said:

"To MILLY.
From her Valentine.

"Little hands, little heart,
Keep them pure and white,
Fit for heavenly errands
And the angels' sight.

"Other hands, tired hands,
Fearless, clasp and hold,
Warming, with warm touches,
Weary hearts and cold.

"So shall hands, so shall heart,
Fair as lilies be,
When, life done, the angels
Come and call for thee."

Milly almost cried over this. She washed her hands slowly and carefully, repeating:

"So shall hands, so shall heart,
Pure as lilies be."

"Oh, I wish they were," she said to herself.

Fastening her dress, she felt in the pocket after a pocket-handkerchief. None was there, but, lo! a parcel met her touch. Wondering, she drew it out. The dress had not been with her at Uncle Silas's. It had been left hanging up at home, but there was no parcel in the pocket when last she wore it.

Milly's fingers trembled with excitement. She could hardly untie the string. Inside the tissue paper which wrapped it was a cunning pink box, full of jeweller's cotton. Milly lifted it. Something lay beneath, so pretty and shining that she

fairly screamed when she caught sight of it. It was a locket of clear white crystal, with a gold rim; and inside a tiny strip of pink paper, on which were these words:

"FOR MILLY, who gave up her own pleasure to make her sick grandpapa happy, with the compliments of

"ST. VALENTINE."

Grandmamma was surprised enough a moment later, when Milly came into the dining-room almost at a run, her crutches clicking and tapping like castanets, and in her hand the locket and the four wonderful letters. She had never known her darling to be so much excited before.

"Did you ever see anything so lovely?" cried Milly. "I don't believe there will be any half so pretty at the party to-night. But who *did* send them, Grandmamma?"

"I can't imagine," replied Grandmamma, thoughtfully. "Ralph did n't say a word about them when he was here."

"Ralph here? Cousin Ralph? When?"

"Yesterday morning. He came over to see how Grandpapa was, he said. It was pretty dull for him, I'm afraid, for old Mrs. Beetles came in and I had to sit with her, and Ralph stayed most of the time with Grandpapa. He went upstairs, now I think of it, and I did hear him in your room. It's queer."

Milly said no more, but she looked surprisingly happy. She loved Ralph very much. Had he really taken all this trouble to give her a pleasure, she thought?

So you see, in spite of her losing the party, St. Valentine did pretty well for Milly, after all. Don't you think so?





GENERAL TROT AND HIS THANKSGIVING DINNER



GENERAL TROT AND HIS THANKSGIVING DINNER

IT was the morning of Thanksgiving Day, and the old kitchen of Farmer Thayer's was in a bustle. Rachel, the cook, has just thrown a fresh armful of hickory on the blazing fire; and, as its heat rises and spreads, the great pot which hangs above begins to sing, and the turkey inside, who was so big they could hardly squeeze him in, extends a claw from under the cover, and wildly gesticulates, as to say: "Look here! Did you ever? *What* a dinner you're going to have!" The chickens in the tin baker hiss and crackle, and send forth an odor of stuffing; the Washington pie in the salamander blushes a delicate brown; from the big oven alongside, whose door Mrs. Thayer has set open, come other delicious smells — of gingerbread and rusk, pumpkin pies, baked beans with crisp islands of

pork in their midst, Indian pudding, spicy and flavorous, and loaves of cake, whose every other crumb seems a raisin. It is a very paradise of good things. No wonder that the children, who have been ordered to keep out of the kitchen, are clustered outside the door in the entry, snuffing the gales from the keyhole, and prancing about, impatient for dinner-time which never seemed so long in coming before. Thanksgiving comes but once a year, as little people know to their cost; and when it comes they are bound to make the most of it.

There are four of them, — Tom, who is nine years old; Phebe, seven; Jerry, a solemn fellow of five and a half; and little Trot, just turned four, who by virtue of being the baby rules them all. For in large families we often see carrried out the Bible prediction which says "The last shall be first" — the smallest and meekest of all being allowed to have his own way and govern the others.

Tom is long and thin; Jerry short and fat; Phebe has a meek face, with soft blue eyes and fair hair, and looks as innocent as a kitten, except for one roguish twist about her mouth; Trot, a small person, is all bounce and activity, like an India-rubber ball or a snapping-cracker. They are very hungry and very impatient.

"This old morning is the longest I ever saw," declared Tom. "I'm as hungry — as hungry as — as vinegar."

This is Tom's favorite expression. He always compares everything to vinegar.

"And I am as hundry as vinegar, too," says Trot.

"I know what we're going to have," says Phebe, who, being a girl, had managed to creep into the kitchen once or twice. "I saw mother making it."

"Oh, what? Tell us!" screamed Tom and Jerry.

"I know," repeated Phebe. "I know all about it." And she shook her head mysteriously.

"Do tell us. Oh, do tell!" clamored the others. And they teased and coaxed, till at last Phebe said, "Put down your heads, then," and in each ear whispered mysteriously the word "apple sauce."

"Pshaw!" cried Tom. "I knew that before. We always have apple sauce Thanksgiving, and turkey too, and chicken, and squash, and squash pie, and onions, and custard, and —"

"Nuts," chimed in Trot; "and little bits of teeny-weeny tarts."

"Oh, dear!" cried Tom, "it makes me hungry just to think of them. I wish dinner would come. Mother might give us something to eat, I do think."

"Why, Tom, you ate thirteen buckwheats this morning at breakfast; you know you did."

"Well, what if I did. You ate nine, and you 're only a girl, besides, Phebe."

"I had more 'n a hundred, I guess," remarked Trot.

This made them laugh.

"I tell you what," said Tom, "let's go into the keeping-room and *play* at having dinner. We'll play it is Thanksgiving, just as it really is; and I'll be father and sit at this end of the table."

"And I'll be mother," said Phebe, taking her chair. "Jerry shall be Aunt Prudence; and Trot — who had you rather be, Trot?"

"General Grant," vociferated Trot. "I'm making you a visit. My cannon's in the entry, and here's my sword! I've hung it on the back of the chair."

"Well, that'll be nice! I'm glad there's such a good dinner; ain't you, Pa, since General Grant's here? I guess you had a great deal better things to eat, though, when you was fighting. Had n't you, General?"

"Yes, splendid!" said the General. "I had— What did I have, Tom?"

"Rebel rams," suggested Tom.

"Yes; and the Confeds ran like sheep once,

Pa said, so you could eat them, you know," went on Phebe.

"I did!" said Trot — "boiled 'em, and ate 'em. They was bully!"

"Now," cried Phebe, seizing her mother's button-bag, "these shall be the dinner. This big yellow button is the turkey; these red ones are cranberry; and the white ones potatoes and turnips and rice. Then we 'll play this pink button is roast beef; and the glass ones shall be our tumblers, and we 'll drink out of 'em. And here are the pies — mince and pumpkin and apple. Will you have some turkey, Pa?"

"Help the General first, Ma! It ain't polite to begin with the family."

"'Scuse me. General, shall I help you to some turkey?"

"'Course," answered the General, passing his button with great vigor. "I 'll have all the breast and the stuffing, and lots of gravy — but no drumsticks, 'cause generals don't ever eat 'em;



"'What delicious custard!' cried Phebe, pretending to take a large mouthful of pearl button." *Page* 49.



they give 'em to the drummer-boys always. And I 'll have the wish-bone; and that 's all."

General Grant thus moderately helped, Tom got a piece, and then Jerry.

"What *de*licious custard!" cried Phebe, pretending to take a large mouthful of pearl button. "I never!"

"And I never!" echoed General Grant, carving his turkey very hard.

Then Jerry asked for more potato and more apple sauce; and Tom helped himself to onions and offered the others plum-pudding (which was a purple mixed button, like some on Phebe's frock); and they ate and chattered, and the fun grew fast and furious.

Suddenly General Grant began to choke and gag in a very singular manner.

"What 's the matter, General?" asked Tom. "What 's gone wrong?"

"That turkey-bone is a-sticking in my throat," gurgled Trot.

"Tom!" cried Phebe, in great alarm, "I do believe he 's been and swallowed a button! Have you, Trot? Oh dear! what will Mother say?"

"I did n't," said Trot, recovering his voice. "It was n't buttons! It was tomato and turkey — oh! — and pudding."

"Why, he 's been eating them," said Phebe. "How many did you give him, Tom?"

Nobody could tell. When they counted, ever so many seemed missing — red ones, and white ones, and yellow, two mixed purple (under the name of plum-pudding), four agate with gilt rims, and half a card of blue broadcloth like the boys' Sunday jackets. All these Trot had disposed of, in the excitement of the game. He had thrown himself so thoroughly into his part as to forget it was all play, and had swallowed his button-dinner as contentedly as if it had really been the turkey and tomato they pretended it to be.

The poor little General! You can imagine what a commotion took place when the tale was

told; how Mother and Aunt Prudence came rushing in, and Trot was kissed, and cried over, and questioned, till he, too, began to cry, and said he "did n't want to play any more." The doctor was sent for; and Uncle Joe, who was rather gruff, scolded them all around, and said if Trot did n't die before morning he ought to get the worst kind of a whipping! But, bless you, it takes more than a button or two to kill a general! The doctor's medicine made Trot a little uncomfortable; but I never heard that the buttons did a bit. He forgot his griefs entirely by dinner-time, and enjoyed it like a hero, besides being then and all the evening after "as bright as a button"; which, if eating buttons can make one so, is nothing remarkable. And when the real turkey and mince pie had taken their turn, and the nuts and apples and cider were brought out, the candles lit, and everybody had got over his fright and settled down for a jolly evening, the queer little adventure of the morning furnished

them with all sorts of fun, in which Trot, perched on his mother's lap, joined as thoroughly as anybody. Aunt Prudence, for the first time in her life, made an original conundrum, which everybody guessed at once — only everybody gave a different answer. I'll give it you before I stop, and one of the answers; the others you must find out for yourself.

"What is the difference between *our* General Grant and the real one?"

Answer: "One is a little man all over buttons outside, and the other is a little man all over buttons inside."



HARRY'S FORENOON WITH THE BEAR



HARRY'S FORENOON WITH THE BEAR

HARRY is a little boy, five years old. He lives in the city with his papa and mamma and his sister Elsie, who is not as old as he, and cannot go to school, as he does every day — not a big school, you know, but a few boys and girls about Harry's age, who are all learning to read and write a little, and count a very little bit. It is a nice school, they think, with good long recesses and plenty of fun; and, as they go at nine o'clock, and come home at twelve, and have no lessons to learn in the evenings, and as their teacher Miss Edwards is "as nice as nice can be," and "the prettiest girl in New York," as Harry insists, I think, on the whole, school is more pleasure than trouble.

But, though Harry likes it, and is happy in his big nursery with his playthings, and though he

has a sled and goes out with it and has famous afternoons with the other boys when snow comes, still he has heard wonderful stories about boys who live in the country and can be all the time out of doors, playing ball in summer, and in winter sliding down lovely long hills on their sleds, or skating on ponds all by themselves with just as much room as they want for "striking out." Though Harry is not big enough to skate, and does not know in the least how to "strike out," still he thought the country must be the most charming thing in the world, and used to be always talking about it and wishing he could go there. So he was almost topsy-turvy with joy when he found, last July, that he was to go with his papa and mamma and good Nurse Nora to the real country — ever so far off, to a place with mountains and hills "all over it," as Harry said — and to stay there at least two months.

So, while Nurse Nora was packing the trunks, Harry danced about her in a state of wild excite-

ment, and asked more questions than ten grown people could have answered.

"And what lives in the mountains, Nursey?"

"I can't tell you, Master Harry. Birds, I should think, and blueberries, belike."

"Yes; and bears!" said Harry — "great black bears! I've read about 'em in the geography."

"Sure there'll be no bears," said poor Nora, who was not so well acquainted with geography as Harry; "the master would n't take you to such a place."

"Yes, there will; I tell you there will!" persisted Harry — "there will be bears on the mountains. Who's afraid of a bear? They ain't very big; and if one runs after you, all you've got to do is to climb up a tree, and there you are, all fixed, and the bear can't get you. I've read about them in Captain Mayne Reid; and every word he says is true! I just hope one will chase after me; I'd show you!" And Harry, putting himself into a warlike attitude,

first repelled the bear of his fancy with the bellows; and then, pretending to be hotly pursued, climbed the bedpost with great speed, and sat on top, making triumphant faces at the baffled foe, who was supposed to be gnashing his teeth with rage under the bed.

You see that Harry was a little given to boasting, like other boys of his age; but it is a bad trick, and always ends by making people laugh at you. I used to tell Harry a story of a boy I once knew, who went to live with some little cousins whom he had never seen. He was only four years old, but he spent the whole of the first day in strutting up and down the nursery, bragging of the great things he had done and could do. "Robbers" were his great boast. He was never afraid of them — even when they came by the dozen, all jack-boots, big black whiskers, and sharp knives. He never ran, not he! He stood his ground, and *they* ran away from him as fast as their legs could carry them.

Well, that night he was put to bed in a little room by himself. And by and by his Aunty downstairs heard a terrible howling and screaming going on, and running up, found this brave hero sitting up in bed, and crying as if his heart would break.

"What is the matter, my dear child?" said Aunty.

"There is a r-o-o-b-b-e-r under my bed," sobbed the little boy.

"A robber, dear? Nonsense! There 's nothing there."

"Yes, there is!" persisted he. "I heard him; he 's *chewing my India-rubbers.*"

Harry thought this story very funny, and used to laugh a great deal at it; but it did n't cure him of his habit of boasting. So he too came to grief, as you will see.

Harry thought he was going to be perfectly happy when he first saw the village where they were going to spend the summer. It stood on a

hillside, and you could see off on all sides for miles and miles, and more mountains than you could count. Just behind the hotel rose a high, steep hill, called Bald Head, and people used often to climb to the top to see the view, which they said was very fine.

At first Harry found plenty to keep him happy and busy in the woods, which came down close to the house. There were some dear little brooks, in which he and other children used to build dams and bridges of boughs, covered with moss; and there were nice hiding-places among the rocks for hide-and-go-seek. The woods were so near and safe that his mother was not afraid to have him go there alone; and that he liked best of all, it made him feel so grown-up and independent. He would come in at dinner-time with cheeks as red as apples, and clothes as wet and muddy as if he had been rolled in the dirt. But his mamma only laughed when she saw him, and never scolded; for she knew that health was a great

deal better than nice clothes, and was quite satisfied as long as she saw him happy and with such a famous appetite.

It was rather a pity that the other children in the hotel happened to be a little younger than Harry, for it made it easier for him to keep up his habit of boasting. He was always telling them what he could do, and would do, and had done. He especially enjoyed the subject of bears, and used to be so noisy and fierce that the little ones admired him a great deal and believed every word he said.

Harry heard somebody saying one day that bears had been known, in cold weather, to come down from Bald Head on to the roads, in search of something to eat; so he was wildly anxious to go with all the parties that started to walk up, in his secret heart hoping he might be lucky enough to meet a bear, or perhaps several, which would be still finer. He teased his mother about it a great many times. But she thought he was

too young, and would be tired out, and hinder the pleasure of the older people; so she said "No," which Harry thought very hard.

At last, one night at tea he heard some ladies talking about a walk to Bald Head the very next day. His papa and mamma were to go, and they were to start at ten o'clock, so as to be back to dinner.

All this put into Harry's head a very rash plan; and, after he went to bed, he lay thinking it over, and at last made up his mind to carry it out. You shall hear what it was.

Only to run away next morning, as soon as his breakfast was over, and climb the mountain all by himself!

"If they find me on top when they get there," thought Master Harry, "they can't send me back; and that will *prove* to Mamma (Harry was fond of long words) that I am big enough to go to places with big people."

So next morning as soon as he could swallow

his breakfast, he stole away and ran as fast as he could along the path which led to the mountain. Nobody missed him, for they supposed he was at play with the other children.

At first it seemed fine fun to climb a mountain. The path was not steep, and the whortleberries were ripe; so that, when he stopped to take breath, he had something pleasant to fill his hands and mouth with. But by and by the bushes began to grow higher; and Harry was such a little fellow that the boughs slapped his face as he climbed up, and that he did not like at all.

However, he broke off a stick, and struck the boughs aside as well as he could; but the path grew harder to climb, and twisted and turned in and out of the thicket, and the sun began to be very hot. Poor Harry panted and puffed; but still he struggled on bravely, till at last a root tripped him up and threw him forward on his face. He jumped up at once; but his hands were scratched, and his nose began to bleed. So,

though he was really a manly little fellow, for all his bragging, he felt exactly like sitting down and having a good cry.

This, he knew, however, would never do for a conqueror of bears; so he made a plucky effort, wiped his face and hands as well as he could, and went a little farther on.

But now he began to be very tired. The walk was really too hard for such a little fellow; and Harry began to have an idea that his mamma was right, though he did not like to own it. The woods closed him in on every side. He thought how dreadful it would be to get lost in them, and felt very little and lonely all at once. However, he knew he was in the path, and a good way up the hill, though not "almost on top," as he would have said. So he thought he would sit down on a large flat rock he saw, which was covered with soft moss, like a cushion, and looked very comfortable, and rest till the party came from the hotel. Finding him so far up, he

thought he was safe not to be sent back; and, with the help of his papa's hand, he knew he could get to the rocky top, which he could see far above his head.

So he sat down, and began to think what a fine thing he had done, and how the other children would wonder when they knew about it. And then he spied a large black ant scrambling over some stiff red moss close by; and, having nothing else to do, he began to teaze him. The moss was wiry and sharp, and as hard for the ant to climb as a hedge of prickly cacti would be for a man; so it was cruel and discouraging to be seized by the hind-leg and jerked back by Harry every time he had nearly climbed over. At last he gave it up, and lay still as if he was dead; and just at that moment Harry heard a rushing in the bushes, and looking up saw a dreadful sight. What do you think? A large black bear just opposite him, and sitting quite still on his hind-legs! Half of him was hid by the bushes, which

were very thick; but Harry could see his fore-paws and his head. His mouth was a little open, and (this was most dreadful of all) two sharp white teeth were plainly to be seen. He did not move in the least, and his eyes seemed to be shut, for Harry could not see them; but yet he did not dare to hope that he was asleep.

If any of you consider Harry a coward, you must try to think how you would feel if you should go into the woods alone some day, and meet a great black bear all at once. He was so dreadfully scared that he could not stir, and sat as still as the bear, staring right in his face. He was too frightened even to cry; and as for running away, his legs felt all of a sudden as if they were made of lead, and were too heavy and stiff to move. So he sat and glared at the bear, who did not glare, but showed his teeth, as if to say: "Take these as a sample of the set; don't you think they could eat you?"

Every now and then some little rustling noise

would come, and Harry would shake all over, and think, "Now he is going to begin." But the bear never moved an inch—just sat there and showed his teeth!

When Harry told the story afterward, he said that they staid so "hours and hours—'most a whole day"; but it was really about twenty minutes. Then a sound of voices was heard, and Harry's papa and a lady came in sight, climbing up the path.

Even then Harry did not dare to move, for fear the bear might make a rush and carry him off before the very eyes of his friends. It was not till they were so near that he almost touched them that he at last gave a spring, and, catching hold of Papa's coat, began to cry as if his heart would break.

"Why, Harry!" said Papa, and "Why, Harry!" came from below, whence Mamma, on her way up, caught sight of her unexpected boy.

"Oh! Papa; the bear! the bear!" sobbed poor Harry, as soon as he could speak.

"The bear! What do you mean, my boy?"

"There! there!" cried Harry, pointing into the bushes.

Wonderful to relate, the bear had not moved. Harry's papa raised his stick, and went close up to it. Still it did not move. Then he laid his hand upon it, and then burst out laughing.

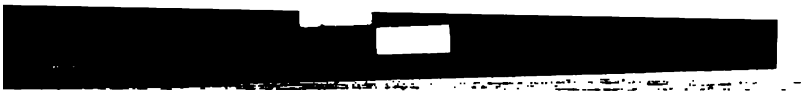
"Come here, Harry," said he.

Poor Harry crept up slowly, not feeling safe yet; and, when he was close to it, what do you think the great black bear turned into? Nothing in the world but a large black stump.

There it lay, half in, half out of the bushes; and a little way off it really looked very like a bear sitting on his hind-legs, with his forepaws raised. As for the sharp white teeth which frightened Harry so much, they were only two little pointed fungi, of the kind which grow on old trees, and happened in this case to be just where the wooden bear's mouth would come. His father broke them off and showed them to Harry.

You can guess that they all laughed. But they were sorry for the poor little fellow, with his white cheeks and red eyes; and his father lifted him up very tenderly, and took him back to the hotel, where he was glad enough to see Nurse Nora's kind face, and to have some milk to drink, and lie down on the nursery bed for a good nap. When he waked up, his mamma was sitting by him, and he got into her lap, and told her how it all happened, and how sorry and frightened he had been. And she kissed him, as dear mammas always will when their children are really sorry, and forgave him for thinking himself wise and big enough to disobey her. I am happy to say that Harry has been very good ever since, and has almost cured himself of his habit of boasting; and we hope that he will be better all his life for the excellent lesson he learned that morning with the bear.





THE TWO LITTLE MISSIONARIES



THE TWO LITTLE MISSIONARIES

"THE importance of home missionary work is pressing daily with greater force upon all reflecting minds. First provide for thine own; that is Bible precept."

This was what Papa read aloud from the paper at breakfast one morning; and Alice and May, with their mouths full of buckwheat cakes, were listening with their ears wide open, though they did n't know just what it meant.

"What is home missionaries, Papa?" asked little May.

"You know what missionaries are, don't you, dear?"

"Yes, Papa, I guess I do. They 're good people, is n't they, who sail round the world and teach the Bible to the heathens?"

"Well, home missionaries are good men who teach the Bible without sailing round the world. You know dear, there are plenty of poor, wicked people in this country, too; and the missionaries go to them and try to make them better, and show them how to read the Bible and find out about God and all good things."

"Where do they go, Papa?" said Alice.

"Oh, some of them go to the West, pet; and some to the Indians, and some to teach the black people at the South. Some of them stay here in New York, and have schools for poor little boys and girls, and nice places for them to sleep in at night. Should you like some day to go down town with me and see one?"

"I'd like to *be* one," said little May.

"Well, my darling, you'll have the chance some time. The Lord always sends work to willing hands. Even a little girl can help along in the home missionary cause. I'd love to have my two useful in that way."

And so saying, Papa folded up his paper, kissed them all round, and started off for his office. This was all he said about the missionaries; but it put a funny idea into the children's heads, as you shall hear.

"I wish we knew how to begin," said Alice to May, that afternoon. "Papa said even little girls like us could."

"Perhaps we 're too little," said May, who *was* very little. They were in their play-room in the attic when they began to talk. It was a splendid place, big and square and empty, with funny hiding-places down where the low part of the roof came, and plenty of empty boxes and odds and ends which they might move about and meddle with as much as they liked. For Mamma said that little people must have a play-place of their own to make them happy on rainy days. So she gave them this to do what they liked in; and always when it was bad weather, and they could n't go out doors, they came up here and

had a lovely time. All their toys were kept here; and here they told their secrets, and had a postoffice, and wrote each other little notes, which were very interesting and important, for, as they were hardly ever apart, they generally read them with their heads close together and their arms about each other's necks.

They were whispering now — not that there was the least danger of anybody's hearing what they said, but because they liked it.

"I don't believe we're a bit too little," said Alice. "I'm not at any rate; and you could help me, you know, May, even if you're too small to do it alone."

"So I could," said May, looking very bright. She liked to help Alice.

"You see," Alice went on, "perhaps we're not big enough to teach schools for a good many poor children. But I think, if we could find one — just one, you know — who wasn't very big, we might teach her as far as we've got — First

Reader, you know, and up to seven times one, and the boundaries; that would take a good while, and we should be keeping ahead of her all the time."

"And make a nice place for her to sleep," added May, her eyes sparkling.

"May, you're real clever. I never thought of that. Let's see, where could we put her? It must be where she'd not be a trouble to anybody but just us. Oh! May, I've thought. She shall live up here in our play-room! We'll make a bed, and fix it all nice, and nobody'll find it out till she's grown up and knows how to read and all; and then we'll bring her downstairs. Won't Papa and Mamma be surprised?"

"Oh, goody! Isn't that splendid?" cried May, dancing about the attic. "Where shall we put the bed?"

"Let's see," said Alice. "That big box would be nice, I guess; because then there'll be room for her to grow up. And here's the cushion of your old crib to go in it, and a lovely comforter

to keep her warm. Do you see any pillows anywhere?"

"Only the one in my dolly's bedstead," replied May.

"Well, that'll do as long as she's little — it's pretty big. Now, her bed's all nice; and we'll bring up the Reader and Spelling-book, and then we shall be all ready."

"But she must have something to eat," said May, who was very wise for such a little thing.

"So she must. We'll save things from breakfast and dinner for her, won't we? I guess Nurse would give us some crackers now, if we ask her."

So down they ran. Nurse was happy to give them as many crackers as they wanted; and they picked out a clean little box to keep them in and serve as a storeroom. Every day they contrived to save something — sometimes bread, sometimes a bit of cheese, or a little dried beef, or an apple — things they thought would keep.

And now the box was nearly full, the bed was

made, and the books brought up and arranged with marks at the first lesson. All was ready except the little girl; but that was an important exception! Where was she to come from?

"You know," said Alice, "Papa said the Lord always sent work to willing hands. So, when he is ready, he 'll send us our little girl."

But they waited day after day, and she did n't come. The bread got very dry and the apples began to spoil. Matters looked desperate. So one day Alice took a sudden idea.

"Home missionaries don't wait for people to come," she said; "they go and find 'em. We 'll run right down to the alley, May; and, if we find a poor little girl there, we shall know that the Lord sent her."

So down they ran to the back gate; and, sure enough, the first thing they saw was a little girl, about as big as Alice, walking along, kicking up the dirt with the toes of her boots. Ah! here she was at last.

"Little child," cried Alice, running up to her, "please come in here. We want to show you something."

The "little child" was willing enough to go into the nice house with the pretty little sisters; so in she came. She was dirty and ragged enough to please anybody; and Alice felt very proud as she led her into the garret.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said; "we're all ready for you. Here's your bed, and here are the books — you'll soon be able to read them."

"And here's your dinner," broke in May — "all these nice apples and crackers; and we'll stay up here with you every minute of the time when we're not in school."

"Yes!" cried Alice. "You'll be glad to hear us coming, won't you? And you must never make any noise or look out of the window, for fear people'll find you out. And by and by, when you're quite grown up, we'll take you downstairs and tell them all about it."



"'I 'm so glad you 've come,' she said; 'we 're all ready for you.'"

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The little girl looked from one to the other, with her eyes growing wild and scared; but, when Alice ended with this dreadful news, that she was to stay there till she was quite grown up, and never even peep out of the window, she was almost frightened to death. In a great hurry she twitched her hand away; and before they knew what she was about she was half way downstairs, racing off as fast as her feet could carry her.

The children were much distressed. "Stop, little girl. Oh, please come back!" they cried, and ran after her. But she did n't answer a word; and as for coming back, that did not seem likely, for when they reached the alley-gate she was quite out of sight. They ran this way and that, calling to her; but she was gone, and they never saw her again.

Little May burst out crying, and even Alice could not keep back the tears. They were too disappointed to hide it; and, meeting Mamma just then, they opened their hearts and told her all

about it. She could n't help laughing a little; but she kissed and comforted them, and, when they began to feel better, explained to them how their way was not the best one to do good, and that they had no right to make the little girl come and live in the attic against her will.

So they gave up the plan, and let cook take the (very dry) provisions away to give to some poor person who might like them. And when they grow up, as they will some day, they will see what Papa meant by God sending work; and I hope their hands will be as willing then as now.



NANNY AND HER VALENTINES





NANNY AND HER VALENTINES

IT was the thirteenth of February, rather late in the afternoon, and Ned Price and Sam Allen were down on the ground in the fence-corner putting on their skates. There was pretty good ice still, though the weather had grown so warm that there seemed little chance of its lasting long. And the boys had run all the way from school, so as to make the most of what might be the last good skate of that winter.

Ned had one skate buckled, and Sam was drilling a hole with his knife in the heel of his boot, when they heard voices close by — in the next yard, in fact; only, as the fence was high and the field rather low, they could n't see the speakers. The yard belonged to Mrs. O'Rourke, the washer-woman; and it was little Nanny

O'Rourke who was talking, and a young friend of hers named Katy.

Nanny was a dear, good child, with pretty blue eyes and soft curly hair; but her face looked pale and sickly, and her poor little body was somewhat deformed. A careless nurse had dropped her when she was a baby, and her back had never been straight since. You didn't think much of it, though, when you saw the sweet look she had, and knew how patient and loving and bright she was all day long. Everybody liked her, and her mother said she wouldn't exchange her for twenty children, each twelve feet high and as stiff-backed as a grenadier; and, indeed, I think it would have been a bad bargain for the poor woman — for so many children, especially such enormously big ones, would soon have eaten up all she could earn, and a great deal more. But Nanny, just as she was, seemed a real comfort, and as bright and helpful as a little girl of seven could be.

She and Katy were swinging on the gate opposite each other, and the boys could easily hear every word they said. At first they did n't attend much; but by and by Katy got talking so fast that they began to listen.

"And I told her, 'What's that, Biddy?' And she said, 'Never mind!' But she let me look once; and it was splendid! There was silver things atop, you know; and pink roses and blue roses; and then a writing, 'From your Valentine,' and it cost sixteen cents down to Sperry's; and she puts the name outside and carried it to the corner, and says nothing; but I guessed it out."

"Oh, who do you think, Katy?" cried Nanny, quite excited.

"Addie Sherman, or else Tom. I don't rightly know; but there was a big 'S.' Oh, Nanny, would n't you like one yourself?"

"Yes," said Nanny. "Don't you wish somebody'd send us one? I never had a valentine. Did you?"

"Never but just one," replied Katy; "and that was a bit of a five-cent one, which my brother he sent it. But a grand one like Biddy's — oh, Nanny, would n't that be fine?"

"Perhaps we will some time," said Nanny; "but I'm afraid I'm not big enough this year."

"Just hear those girls," whispered Sam. "Did you ever! I wonder who they think is going to send 'em valentines! And that little Nanny, with her hunch-back — *she'll* never get one as long as she lives."

"Yes, she shall too, if I send it myself," said Ned, flushing. "And you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Sam, to call her a hunchback; for she's the dearest little thing in town, mother says, if she is a little crooked. I've heard mother wish more than once that she had a girl of her own half so sweet."

"I call her an ugly little piece," muttered Sam, as he took his first long stroke half across the pond; and then the boys got so busy in

skating that they did n't talk any more on the subject.

But Sam did not forget it. He was not exactly a bad boy; but he was hard and selfish, and did n't care much about other people and their feelings, and it always made him mad to be snubbed, as he called it. So, when that evening he happened to catch sight of Ned just coming from the book-store, with a gay valentine in his hand, he guessed it might be meant for Nanny; and somehow the idea made him cross, and a plan for teazing her came into his head. So he too went in and bought one. And that evening he followed Ned about and watched behind fences till he saw him steal into Mrs. O'Rourke's yard and fasten a parcel to the door-knob; and, as soon as he was gone, he stole in too, tied a second parcel above the first, gave a good loud rap with his knuckles, and ran away.

Mrs. O'Rourke was sitting by the stove with Nanny in her lap, when the rap came. She had

done a hard day's work, and was resting a little and petting her darling before eating the supper which stood ready on the table. But when the knock came she set her down and went to the door.

"Holy Virgin, what is it?" she exclaimed, as the two parcels swung round and hit her hand. "There's nobody here at all, but just these bits of letters." And she untied them, and shut the door again. "You can read writing, darling," she went on, for Nanny went to school, and her knowledge was a cause of great pride to her mother, who didn't know how to read herself.

"Oh, Mother, there's 'Nanny O'Rourke' on both of them," cried she. "And I do believe they're valentines. Katy and me was talking about 'em only to-night. Isn't it nice! Oh, isn't it nice!" And she jumped and clapped her hands.

Mrs. O'Rourke lighted a candle and put it on the table. "You'll want light to enjoy them by,

dear," she said, and rubbed her hands too — *so* pleased to see her child happy.

Nanny was opening one of the valentines with fingers that shook with pleasure. But how her little face fell when she saw what was inside. If Sam could have been there, I think he would have been more sorry than he ever was in his life before at the success of his cruel trick.

"Oh, Mammy! Mammy!" she sobbed, "how could they, how could they?" And she held out the paper. It was a vile daub of a picture — an ugly figure, with a great hump on its back, and under it was written in a sprawling hand: "That 's how you 'll look when you 're grown up."

Poor Nanny! she was so grieved that it seemed as if she could not get over it. She sat crying on her mother's lap a long time; and Mrs. O'Rourke petted and soothed her, and called her a "sweet darlin'" and "Mammy's own beauty and sunshine," till by and by the little lips ceased to quiver and the sobs grew quiet. She sat quite

still, and did not seem to remember the other letter; till at last her mother said: "Won't you be opening this one, dear? Maybe it's something nice."

"I'm afraid of it," said Nanny; "perhaps it'll be bad, too." But she took it, for all that, and broke the seal.

Oh, how different this one was! There was the silver dove, and the blue and pink roses, just like that of which Katy was telling her, and a dear little boy with gilt wings sitting in a shell with wheels, and driving a lamb with a chain of flowers round his neck; and underneath was written this verse:

"Dear little Blue Eyes, I love you well,
Better than pen and ink can tell,
And that my meaning may plainly be seen
I've concluded to write it in letters of green.

"When the Spring is once fairly here,
Go and look in your garden, dear,
There you'll see growing in the sunshine
The name of my chosen

"VALENTINE."

"Oh!" cried Nanny, with sparkling eyes, "is n't it beautiful? I never did see anything so sweet. Oh, Mother, was n't it kind in somebody to send it to me?"

"Yes," said Mrs. O'Rourke, "it was that! I'd like to thank him for it myself."

"But what will I see in my garden when spring comes?" went on Nanny. "How can names grow in gardens, Mammy? I can't think."

Mammy did n't know; but she saw that her pet had forgotten all about the ugly, unkind valentine. So she took the first chance to drop it into the fire, hoping it would never be thought of again; and I don't think it was, for Nanny was one of those dear little souls who find it easier to be happy than unhappy, and forget disagreeable things as soon as they can, and she was so pleased at her beautiful valentine that she did n't think any more of the one that had made her cry so hard at first.

March passed, and April, with warm rains and bright sun, came on, and the little patch she called her garden became ten times as interesting as ever before to Nanny. She raked and smoothed it all ready for planting; but she put no seeds into it, and went out every day to look at it, and see if the verses were coming true, and something wonderful springing up out of the ground. And when the first of May came something strange did appear: the earth began to crack in a queer zigzag all across the bed, and in the cracks a row of tiny green points to push themselves up, getting bigger every day.

It was like a miracle! Nanny visited the garden the first thing every morning and the last thing at night; and every moment she could get out of school she spent there, watching the wonderful things grow. By and by they were so big that they made a thick, green, even line; and then it could plainly be seen that they grew in the shape of letters, and those letters spelled

a word. What do you think it was? N-A-N-N-Y!

Never did any simple trick give so much pleasure before. Mrs. O'Rourke was never tired of bringing people in to see the sight; and, among the rest, Ned Price had the privilege of a peep, and the satisfaction of seeing Nanny dancing with joy all around the letters he had planted — for, of course, you have guessed it was his doing. He had come very early one morning to the garden; and, after drawing the letters with the point of a stick, had sowed peppergrass seeds in the lines, and then smoothed it all over, so that no one would suspect till they came up. And now, as he watched little Nanny's happiness over it, he enjoyed it almost as much as she. It was a little thing; but life is made up of such.

Now, which of the two boys, do you think, got most pleasure out of his valentine — Ned Price or Sam Allen?





THE FOX AND THE TURKEYS; OR, CHARLEY AND THE OLD FOLKS



THE FOX AND THE TURKEYS; OR, CHARLEY AND THE OLD FOLKS

A cunning fox perceived some turkeys roosting securely on the bough of a high tree. Unable to climb, he resolved to get at them in another way. Night after night he stationed himself beneath the tree, and there played off all sorts of curious tricks. He jumped, he capered, he turned somersaults, he walked on his hind legs, he pretended to be dead, he raised and expanded his tail until, in the moonlight, it looked like a flame of fire, — in short, he performed every antic conceivable. The turkeys, who, to sleep in safety, had only to turn their backs and forget the fox, were so agitated and excited by his pranks that for whole nights they never closed their eyes; the consequence was that they lost strength, and one by one dropped from the bough and into the jaws of Renard, who soon made an end of them.

Moral. — It is unwise to concern one's self with the tricks and antics of mischievous persons. — *La Fontaine's Fables.*

IT was midsummer at the old Brush Farm. When I say "midsummer," how many pretty things it means, — woods at their freshest and greenest, meadows sweet with newly cut hay, cinnamon-roses in the hedges and water-lilies in the ponds, bees buzzing in and out of the clove-pinks and larkspurs which edge the beds of

cabbages and carrots in the kitchen-garden, a humming-bird at work in the scarlet trumpets of the honeysuckle on the porch, — everywhere the sense of fulness and growth, with no shadow as yet of rankness or decay. August is over-ripe. September's smile is sad, but midsummer is all rosy hope, the crown and blossom of the year.

Charley Brush lay under an apple-tree, face downward, and absorbed in "The Red Rover," a book he had read at least ten times before. Stories about ships and sea-life and freebooters and buccaneers were his favorite reading, and, unfortunately, what with illustrated papers and cheap novels and so-called "Boys' books," plenty of such tales abound nowadays. I say unfortunately, for beside teaching him nothing, these books made Charley utterly dissatisfied with his life at home. Hoeing vegetables, chopping wood, and going to the district school seemed dull work indeed to a boy who was longing to stand sword in hand on a bloodstained deck, in a gory uni-

form trimmed with skulls and crossbones, and order his enemies to be thrown one by one into the sea. "The shark awaits your car-casses!" spouted the imaginary desperado with a vicious snap of his teeth; and when Aunt Greg interrupted by asking him to bring in an armful of kindling, he glared at her like the Red Rover himself. Poor Aunt Greg! how little she guessed what was passing in his mind!

"You look real pale to-day," she said. "I was afraid all that mince pie for supper would be bad for you. Here, Charley, I'll mix you some ginger-and-water. That'll settle you, and make all right again."

"Mis-cre-ant!" was what Charley yearned to say, but instead he muttered gruffly, "I ain't sick, and I don't want no ginger." Very bad grammar, as you perceive; but grammar seemed such an unnecessary accomplishment for a would-be buccaneer that Charley never could be induced to pay the least attention to it.

That afternoon, under the apple-tree, he made up his mind. A pirate he must and he would be, by fair means or by foul. He was cunning enough to know that the very word "pirate" would frighten his grandmother into fits, so he only asked her leave to go to sea. Going to sea was, to his mind, a necessary first step toward the noble profession he desired to enter.

"I want to so bad," he whined. "Please say I may."

Grandmother began to cry. Aunt Hitty was sure he must be out of his mind, and ran for the Epsom salts. Aunt Greg quoted, "There's no place like home," and told a story about a boy she once heard of who ran away to sea and never came back, "foundered or drowndered," she could n't remember which. Aunt Prue seized his shoulders and gave him a sound shake. This was what came of idling over story-books all day long, she said, — he could just shut up and go and give the pig its supper, and not let her hear any more trash

like that — making them all feel so bad about nothing.

Charley twisted his shoulder out of her grasp with a scowl, but he took the pail and went out to the pen. All the time that piggy ate he was considering what to do. "I'll tease 'em," he decided, "and tease and tease, and then they'll let me go."

So he did tease, and plead and expostulate, but it was all in vain. Grandmother and the aunts could not be reached by any of his entreaties, and at the end of a week he seemed as far from his desire as ever.

You will wonder, perhaps, that Charley did not run away, as so many boys do in books, and a few out of them. Somehow he never thought of that. He was not a hardy, adventurous fellow at all. His desire to go to sea was a fancy born of foolish reading, and he wanted to have his going made easy for him.

"I must set to work in another way," he

thought at last. "Asking of 'em ain't no use. I must make 'em want to have me go." Then he fell to thinking how this could be done.

"Aunt Hitty would n't hold out long if the others did n't," he thought. "I could coax her into it as easy as fun. She 'll do anything if I kiss and pet her a bit. Then there 's Aunt Greg, — she thinks so much of poetry and such stuff. I 'll hunt up the pieces in the 'Reader' about 'The sea, the sea, the deep blue sea,' and all that, and learn 'em and say 'em to her, and I 'll tell her about coral groves and palm-trees, and make her think it 's the jimmiest thing going to sail off and visit 'em. Grandmother 's always bothering about my being sick, and afraid of this and afraid of that; so I 'll just *be* sick — so sick that nothing but a viyage 'll cure me! As for Aunt Prue, 't ain't no use trying to impose on *her*. I guess I 'll have to be real hateful and troublesome to Aunt Prue. I 'll tease pussy and slop

on the pantry shelves, and track up the floor every time she mops it, and leave the dipper in the sink, and all the other things she don't like, and by and by she'll be just glad to see the last of me! Hi! — that'll fetch 'em all!"

He ended his reflections with a chuckle. Charley was n't really a bad boy, — not bad through and through, that is, — but he had a cunning, tricky side to his nature which made him like to play on the weaknesses of his grandmother and aunts. A sharp boy may prove more than a match for four unsuspecting old women; and though in this case they were in the right and he in the wrong, none the less was he likely to succeed in his crafty plans.

He waited a few days to let opposition subside, and then began his tricks. Charley's first victim was Aunt Hitty. She was a gentle, weak-minded person, easy to persuade, and when Charley put his head into her lap and called her coaxing names, and was sure she was too kind to disap-

point him in the thing he was set upon, her heart softened, and she began to think that they all had been hard and unkind. "The dear boy wants to go awful bad," she told Aunt Greg, and to her surprise Aunt Greg did not fly out and scold as she had expected, but answered, with a sigh, "I suppose sailing on the ocean *is* beautiful!" Aunt Greg had never seen the ocean in her life, but she was naturally romantic.; and Charley, who had been hard at work at the "Reader," had crammed her with all sorts of poetical quotations and fancies concerning it. Flying fish, coral islands, pole stars, dolphins, gallant mariners, wet sheets and flowing seas, figured largely in these extracts, but there was no mention whatever of storms, sharks, drowning, hard work, or anything disagreeable. Aunt Greg could not see the charm of "wet sheets," but all the rest sounded delightful; and gradually a picture formed itself in her mind of a sea which was always blue and always smooth, and of Charley

standing on the deck of a ship repeating poetry to himself in the moonlight; and her opposition grew feebler and feebler.

"Charley 's got a lot of ideas in his head," she said one day when she and her sisters were slicing apples for drying. "He ain't no common boy, Charley ain't. He 'll make a mark yet — see if he don't."

"Dear little fellow!" sighed Aunt Hitty. "*So* lovin' and affectionate! He used to be a little worrisome in his ways at times, but he 's got all over that!"

"Oh, has he?" snapped Aunt Prue. "I 'd like to know when? He 's been more of a plague the last six weeks than ever in his life before. When he upset that milk last night I could have cuffed him. It 's the third time since Wednesday. Mark, indeed! The only mark he 'll ever make is a dirt mark on clean floors. The kitchen looks like Sancho at this moment. I 've washed it up twice as often as ordinary, but as sure as I get

it clean, in he comes stamping about with his muddy boots and tracks it from end to end. I believe he does it a-purpose."

"Oh, Prue!" began Aunt Hitty, in a pleading tone, while Aunt Greg broke in, indignantly:

"A-purpose! Well! Charley's mind is on other things, I can tell you, and it 's no wonder he sometimes forgets to wipe his feet."

"Other things! Getting off to sea, I suppose you mean?" remarked Aunt Prue, grimly. "He 's pulled the wool over your eyes and Hitty's finely, I declare. As for me, if he 's goin' on to behave as he has done for a spell back, the sooner he quits the better. I wash *my* hands of him," and Aunt Prue flounced into the buttery just as Grandmother came in at the other door.

"Charley, is it, you was talking about?" she asked. "Did you hear him coughin' last night? I did, and I could n't sleep a wink for worrying about it. A real deep cough it was. Do you

suppose it the lungs, and what 's good for him to take?"

"He 's well enough except for mischief," put in Aunt Prue through the buttery door.

"Prue never thinks anything ails anybody," said Mrs. Brush, sinking her voice to a whisper. "I 'm really consarned about Charley. He don't eat hardly anything at dinner. That ain't a bit natural for a growin' boy. And he says he lies awake a great deal of nights. He thinks it 's the air about here makes him feel bad, but I don't know if he 's right about it. I wish we 'd a doctor here to say if going off to sea — or somewhere — would be the best thing for him. I 'm clean confused as to what we 'd best do about it, but I 'm real uneasy in my mind."

Charley, coming in just then, chuckled to himself as he heard her.

So things went on, and by October Charley had his wish. It was settled that he should go to sea. Aunt Greg drove over to Wachusett

Center and consulted with old Mr. Greg, her father-in-law, who was the wise man of the neighborhood.

"Let him go — let him go," was Mr. Greg's advice. "When a chap like that gets the bit between his teeth, it 's no use to keep yanking at the reins. Let him go for one long cruise, and see how he likes it. Ten to one he 'll come back then and be glad to settle down. He ain't the kind of boy to make a sailor of, I judge. There 's Ben Bradley, — my first wife's cousin, — captain of one of them China traders; ship Charley with him. I 'll write a line, and I guess Ben 'll kind of keep an eye on him for the sake of the connection."

So, late in the fall, Charley went to sea. Grandmother and the aunts felt dreadfully sad when it came to the parting; but he was full of satisfaction and triumph, and never shed a tear. The "Helen Weeks," as Captain Bradley's ship was named, sailed from Boston on the second

of November, and for fifteen months nobody at home heard a word of Charley.

Those were sad days at the old Brush Farm. Grandmother fell ill from anxiety, and even Aunt Prue looked white and miserable. Aunt Greg and Aunt Hitty spent their time crying in corners, and "Why did we let him go?" was the language of all their hearts. But in February, when everything was at its coldest and iciest, Charley came back, — Charley or his ghost, for the tall, thin, starved-looking, ragged boy set down at the gate was very unlike the stout, rosy lad of the year before.

He was so weak and forlorn that it was several days before he recovered enough to explain what had happened to him, and then it was little by little, and not as I give it in one connected story.

"I don't ever want to go to sea again," he began. "It ain't a bit like what *we* thought it was. I don't know why them chaps in the

'Reader' called it 'blue.' It 's green and black and yellow, and all kinds of colors, but I never see it look blue exceptin' when folks was lookin' at it from the land. It 's cold, too, and wet and nasty. I was n't dry once for the first two months, it seems to me. Ugh! I hate it. Never let to sleep till you 're rested, and such horrid stuff to eat, and sick — my, how sick I was! Captain Bradley was a fair enough sort of man, but he fell ill of China fever, and we had to leave him behind in Canton, and Bill Bunce, the first mate, took his place. After that we had a hard time enough. I thought it was bad at first, but it was n't nothing to that. He was always walloping us boys, and swearing and kicking and cuffing us about. Then we had a storm, and lost our mainmast and came near foundering; and then we were stuck in a calm for three weeks, and the water aboard ran short. That was the time I had the fever. I 'd have died, I know, if it



"'He was always walloping us boys.'" *Page* 112.



had n't been for Tad Brice. He was one of the sailors, and a real nice man. His boy at home was just as old as I am, and he sort of took an interest in me from the start. He used to come in and feed me, and when we were put on allowance, he saved half his water ration for me; and when I got to crying, and thinking about home, and you all, he 'd — " Here Charley choked and was silent. Aunt Hitty, who sat next, possessed herself of his thin hand and wept silently over it.

"When I went away I meant to be a pirate, you know," went on Charley.

"A pirate!" cried Aunt Hitty and Aunt Greg in awe-struck voices.

"Yes. I did n't know much about what it meant, but it sounded somehow nice in the books, and I wanted to be one. But when I asked 'em about it aboard they roared and hooted and made fun, and they all called me Captain Kidd from that time on. And once,

when we were in Shanghai" (Charley's voice sounded full of horror), "we saw two pirates. Tad Brice said they was pirates. The folks was taking 'em to jail. They was *dreadful*, black and ugly, and their eyes were so fierce and bad that it made me cold to look at 'em. I never wanted to be a pirate any more after that, but Bunce and the others, they all kept on calling me Captain Kidd just the same."

"You absurd, ridiculous boy!" began Aunt Prue, but Grandmother hushed her up.

"Now, Prue, I won't have poor Charley scolded when he 's been so sick," she said — "He 's only a boy, anyhow, and he 's going to turn over a new leaf now; ain't you, Charley? and go to school regular, and do his chores, and be the comfort of his granny's life. He 's had enough of goin' to sea; have n't you, Charley? and he 'll stay on the farm now, and we won't ever talk about this bad time

he 's had, and just be thankful to get him back home again."

Charley did n't answer in words, but he turned and gave Grandmother a big kiss, which she knew meant "yes," and they were all very happy that night as they sat together around the fire.

So you see that the fox, though he succeeded in his tricks, was not a particularly happy fox after all. Too much turkey may not be good for a fox, and too much of his own way is certainly not good for a boy.





THE HORSE AND THE WOLF



THE HORSE AND THE WOLF

A prowling wolf espied a horse grazing in the field. "Aha!" cried he, "a prize; but how to manage? A horse is not easy prey, like a sheep. I must try some trick." So he drew near and introduced himself as a doctor. "You must be ill," he told the horse, "or they would not have turned you out to graze. Tell me your disease; I can cure it, whatever it is." "I have a swelling on the under side of my foot," replied the horse. "Let me examine," said the wolf, making ready for a snap. Suddenly the wary horse flung wide his heels and threw the wolf high in air. "Ah!" he howled, as he limped away. "This serves me right. I should not have quitted my trade. Nature meant me for a butcher, not for a doctor."

IN the front of the big house in the square, two windows stood wide open one morning in June. Every one who passed stopped and stared, for nobody had ever seen a window open in the big house before.

The big house faced the south. It should have been bright, but it seemed as if the sun dodged its duty and shone everywhere else.

Inside were large dull rooms, which smelt of furniture, though Mrs. Ursula, the housekeeper, dusted them every day. Mrs. Ursula was tall and bony. She had sharp eyes, with red rims to them, and large, prominent teeth. Most people were afraid of her; but she always trod softly, and spoke as if her mouth were full of sugar, when she entered the room where Governor Alden, the owner of the big house, sat, surrounded with law books, and always alone. He was an old man now; it was years since he had governed anybody, but people called him "the Gove'nor" still. Mrs. Ursula's place was a capital one, everybody said. She ruled the big house, and when "the Gove'nor" died, she would, no doubt, inherit his money; who else had he to leave it to, poor old man?

And now the windows stood open, and passers-by stopped to wonder!

"What is it? Do you know?" asked one of another.

"I know," squeaked a little boy, proud to be wiser than the older people.

"What is it? Tell us quick!" exclaimed the rest.

"It 's a girl. She came last night in the eight o'clock 'bus. She 's pretty, too, you bet. I seen her go in! Bill took in her trunk. He says she 's the Gove'nor's granddaughter, and I guess Mrs. Ursula don't like it much; she most bit Bill's head off. Crickey!"

These remarks concluded, the little boy stood on his head, by way of exclamation point!

"The Gove'nor's granddaughter! I did n't know he ever had chick or child," said a man.

"Did n't you?" said old Mrs. Tibbetts. "Oh, yes. Sophy Alden was the prettiest girl in this town; but she went and took up with a furriner, and her pa cut her off. So her darter 's come here to live, has she? Well, well!"

While the people thus wondered outside the

house, Mignon Chevalier was wondering equally inside. What sort of home was this — what sort of a grandpapa? Why had he first looked at her in such rigid silence; and then, after reading the letter she brought, trembled and cried, and said: "Take her away, Ursula; make her comfortable — I must be alone"? How queer that a house should be built all of wood; how different from the houses she had been used to in France! Why did the people stare so at the windows? She popped out her head to see. Mrs. Tibbetts caught a glimpse of it, framed in its bronze-brown curls, the clear, frank eyes full of curiosity, and cried:

"Bless the girl! Don't she look pretty and skittish! She 's the moral image of her ma!"

Mignon heard; she smiled gayly, and kissed her hand to the old woman.

It did not take long to make the child at home. The old walls seemed to welcome her.

The sun took the house into favor, shone in at Mignon's windows all day, and played bo-peep with her of mornings. The very mice appeared glad of her coming; they racketed about and squeaked gleefully from their hiding-places. All things rejoiced over the young, happy creature. All but Grandpapa. He dared not rejoice. His new-found happiness was mixed with constant anxiety. This was in great part the fault of Mrs. Ursula. She knew that he was afraid of French people, and disliked them; and she never lost a chance of reminding him that Mignon was half French.

"I ought to be getting Miss Chevalier some summer frocks," she would say. "But perhaps I had better let her choose them, — *the French* have so much taste in dress." Or, "I told Biddy to make one of those thin soups *the French* are so fond of. I thought perhaps Miss Mignon would enjoy it. But I'm afraid it's not very good." Or, "I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir,

if I misunderstood; but Miss Mignon gave me the message, and I can't always make out what she says. She has such a foreign accent!"

Mignon's accent was a little foreign, but she spoke English very prettily, and only an envious person could have found fault with her, she was so amiable, fresh, and gay. The old Governor felt the charm. Left to himself he would soon have loved her dearly. When she put her sweet face to his and kissed him good-night, his heart warmed with pleasure. But then came Mrs. Ursula saying: "Miss Mignon is French, you know, and I am only used to American girls. They are *so* different!"

Meantime, when alone with Mignon, she pretended to like her very much. She praised and flattered her, and asked leave to "curl that beautiful hair."

But, though Mignon was gracious and polite, in her heart she was afraid. Mrs. Ursula's large

teeth, and the expression of her red eyes, made her think of a wild beast.

"I feel like Red Riding Hood," she said to herself once, and then she laughed.

So the summer passed. If she had not been the brightest and sunniest of girls, Mignon must sometimes have been very lonely in that dull house with Mrs. Ursula for companion, and Grandpapa, who at times seemed so fond of her, at other times shrinking away and becoming cold and stern.

But she hardly knew the meaning of the word lonely. Outdoors one minute, indoors next, she flashed about like a sunbeam, making friends of every body and thing within her reach. Dogs, cats, birds, currant-bushes, rose-vines, little boys, babies — all were interesting to Mignon. Her light feet echoed strangely in the long halls. People who passed heard her singing, and remarked how different the old house was now that she was there.

One day in August she came in with her lap full of flowers, and Grandpapa opened the study door and called her:

"Mignon, my child, I want you."

Mignon went in. Two gentlemen were there whom she had never seen before. They were sitting by the table, which was covered with papers.

Grandpapa put his arm about Mignon's shoulders. "This is she," he said; "my only daughter's only child. Mr. Squires, Mignon, and Judge Dubberly."

The gentlemen rose and bowed, and Mignon made her curtsy very prettily.

"That will do," said Grandpapa. "Now run away, my dear." Mignon went, but she wondered what it meant.

Mrs. Ursula wondered too, but she guessed pretty well what it meant. She found a good deal to do that morning in the pantry which adjoined the study, and caught words which

made her suspect that the Governor was making his will. Mrs. Ursula did not like this. The Governor had made a will years before Mignon came, in which he left Mrs. Ursula a legacy; she feared that he might forget to do so now.

After a while the gentlemen left. Then the Governor went into the dining-room and opened the iron safe in which he kept his papers. Mrs. Ursula heard the sharp click of the closing door, and was ready to cry with vexation and anxiety.

Two or three days after, something happened that was very sad. Grandpapa came in from the hot sun with a bad headache. That night fever set in, and soon he was very ill.

"He is an old man. There does n't seem much chance for him," the doctor told his wife. He did not say so to Mrs. Ursula, but she looked in his eyes and guessed.

Mignon was grieved to have Grandpapa sick.

Mrs. Ursula took all the care, and would not allow her to do anything; but she would sit beside the bed for hours at a time, fanning Grandpapa, or holding and stroking his hand. Sometimes she would sing little French hymns, in her soft young voice, and he always seemed to like to hear them. But, after a while, he was so very ill that he did not know who was in the room or who was not.

Then came a dreadful evening when the doctor looked graver than usual, shook his head, and whispered that there was almost no hope. Mignon was too unhappy to sleep, and, after Mrs. Ursula thought her safe in bed, she stole back and sat down in a dark corner behind Grandpapa's curtains. There was nothing for her to do, but it seemed a comfort to be there, rather than in her lonely bedroom.

The house was very quiet. After a while Mrs. Ursula came in on tiptoe with a candle, which she shaded with her hand as she stood

beside the bed, looking down at the Governor's face, so white and still that it almost seemed dead.

She stood there a great many minutes; then, moving noiselessly, she crossed the room, and began to fumble in the closet. What was she about? Mignon felt curious. She leaned forward and saw Mrs. Ursula take a key out of the pocket of Grandpapa's waistcoat which hung there. She recognized it well; it was the key of the iron safe in the dining-room.

Mignon was but thirteen, but, in spite of her gay heart, she had a wise little head of her own, and she knew very well that Mrs. Ursula had no business with this valuable key. So, when the housekeeper left the room and went softly downstairs, Mignon crept after to see what was being done.

Mrs. Ursula, standing before the open safe, had no idea that just outside in the dark hall a pair of indignant brown eyes were watching

her every movement. It was as she feared. The Governor *had* made a new will. She read it from end to end, — a small legacy to herself, all the rest to Mignon. But something else lay in the drawer, namely, the old will, which the Governor had not yet destroyed, and in which Mrs. Ursula was left a large legacy, while nothing at all was said of Mignon.

Mignon, watching, saw Mrs. Ursula's face change when she spied this. Her eyes lighted up, she showed her large teeth, and looked more like a wolf than ever. She thought a moment, then took the new will, laid it on the hearth, struck a match, and set fire to the paper. It was only a moment in burning up, all those long words which Grandpapa and the other gentlemen had spent a whole morning over.

"There!" said Mrs. Ursula, aloud, gazing on the little heap of ashes. "There, Miss Mignon! That does for you, I fancy!"

She did not hear the light feet flit upstairs

before her. In the sick-room all was quiet; the Governor lay asleep, or unconscious, and Mrs. Ursula rejoiced.

"Only a day or two more," she thought; "then I 'll send that French chit packing about her business!"

Does it not seem dreadful that any woman should be so wicked? But we must remember that she did n't become wicked all at once. It is the tiny seeds of envy and greediness which we neglect which take root in our hearts unchecked, and after a while crowd out all the good, and lead us to do shocking things which once we should have shuddered at.

Mignon did not go to bed at all that night, but slept in the big chair beside Grandpapa. She felt as if she wanted to watch over him. While she slept the good Angel of Healing passed by and laid his blessed hand on the poor old man. The doctor looked surprised and glad when he came in the morning. The

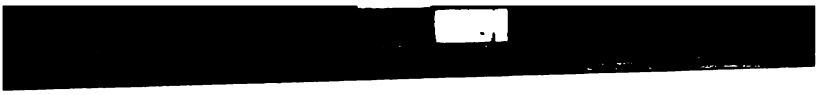
fever had gone, he said; now Grandpapa might get well, only he would need the best of nursing for a long time to come.

"I 'll be nurse," cried Mignon. "Tell me exactly what to do, Doctor, and I 'll do it beautifully. Grandpapa will like to have me; won't you, Grandpapa?" And the sick man smiled faintly and nodded his head.

So the doctor gave directions, and that day, and many days after, Mignon waited on Grandpapa, — the prettiest, brightest, kindest little nurse that ever was. She wrote down all the orders about food and medicine, she timed herself with Grandpapa's heavy old gold watch, and never once forgot or made a mistake. Mrs. Ursula did not interfere, for she was frightened almost out of her wits at the thought of what she had done. It had never occurred to her while she burned the paper that the Governor might get well, and now she did not know which way to turn.



"The prettiest, brightest, kindest little nurse that ever was." *Page* 132.



At last she resolved to tell Grandpapa that Mignon had meddled with the will and burnt it up by accident. "He 'll take my word against that child's, surely," thought she. Meantime, while getting ready to make this accusation, she was very sweet to Mignon, and caressed and flattered her more than ever.

One day in early October, when Grandpapa was so much better as to sit up, Mignon, coming in from a walk, heard a voice in Grandpapa's room. It was Mrs. Ursula's voice.

"If you please, sir, have you the key of the smoke-room?"

"I? No," replied the Governor.

"Oh, then Miss Mignon must have it."

"Mignon! Why, what should she want with that key? She does n't care for hams and tongues, Ursula."

"I don't know, I 'm sure, sir. She 's a curious girl, and she likes to unlock and

turn things over. I don't suppose there 's a drawer in this house, or a closet, that she has n't been into; even the iron safe, though there 's nothing in *that* but papers, to be sure. The French are a singular people."

"What on earth should the child want of the iron safe?" remarked the Governor, surprised and a little fretful, for he was a man who hated to have his things meddled with.

Mignon went to her room quietly.

"How dare she tell such a falsehood?" she thought; "but *why* did she want to tell it?" She felt that Mrs. Ursula was meditating mischief, and she resolved to tell Grandpapa about the burnt paper as soon as he was a little stronger.

It was quite a festival in the big house the day that Grandpapa came down to dinner for the first time. Biddy had prepared a feast. Mignon adorned the room with chrysanthemums and late roses. In the middle of the table

was a bowl of purple and white grapes trimmed with vine-leaves, and the sun streaming in, shone on all, — on the roses, the grapes, on Grandpapa's white head, on Mignon's curls of sunny brown, on the wood fire, and the iron safe which stood in its recess grim and black.

"Grandpapa," asked Mignon as dinner ended, and Mrs. Ursula set the dessert on the table, "what do you keep in *there?*" pointing to the safe with her finger.

"Papers, child."

"And what papers do you keep in the second drawer from the top on the right-hand side?"

Mrs. Ursula stared. Grandpapa was astonished, and a little vexed.

"Why do you ask?" he said.

"I will tell you," replied Mignon, speaking very gravely and looking straight at Mrs. Ursula. "One night when you were very, very sick, Grandpapa, and the doctor said he did not think you could get well, Mrs. Ursula came into your

room and took the safe-key out of your pocket. She did not know I was there, but I was, and I crept after her and watched her. She took a paper out of that drawer and read it; then she took out another paper and read that; then she laid one of the papers in the fireplace, and set fire to it and burned it up. I have not told you before, because you were not strong, but I think I ought to tell you now."

"Is this true?" demanded the Governor, sternly.

"Sir, — I — I — No, it is not true," stammered the terrified Ursula.

Grandpapa rose and went to the safe. He opened the drawer, took out the will, examined it. Then —

"You will notice what I do," he said, "and you, Mignon."

He laid the paper on the logs. It flamed, then blackened; he stood watching till it was quite burned up.

"Now," he said, turning to the housekeeper,

"Go! Your wages shall be paid afterward; but I do not wish to see you again."

"Oh," groaned Mrs. Ursula, as she tied up her bundles, "why did I do such a venturesome thing? I shall never get a place like this again."

With her departed the evil spirit from the old house. From that time Mignon became all in all to Grandpapa. Her youth and brightness made him feel young; her affection cheered him; he loved her tenderly and trusted her in all things.

"Mrs. Tibbetts says you are 'skittish,'" he said one day. "And you *do* make me think a little of a colt in a pasture; you frisk about and toss your head so, and seem to enjoy being alive so much."

"Oh, I'm like a colt, am I?" replied Mignon, saucily. "Well, Grandpapa, you make me think of a gallant old war-horse, who doesn't go to battles any more, but has a good time at home. I don't mind frisking by your side. Mrs. Ursula always made me think of a wolf, do you know? Now we've got rid of her, I can frisk with a light heart and be content."

[redacted]



THE TWO GOATS



THE TWO GOATS

Two youthful goats, belonging to families of high degree among the goat tribes, once encountered each other upon a narrow tree-trunk which spanned a mountain torrent. Said the goat from the East to the goat from the West: "Go back and make way. I am an important goat, a goat of degree. It is but proper that common goats should stand aside when I pass by." "Common, indeed! Pray what do you mean by common?" replied the one from the West. "I would have you to know that I am a full-blooded Merino! Merinoes make way for nobody. Go back yourself!" The dispute raged. Neither would yield an inch. At last, in heat of argument, their horns locked, and a desperate struggle began, in the midst of which both goats lost footing, and, still fighting, fell from the bridge into the water, which speedily cooled their anger and brought them to their senses.

THE day of Miss Alicia Belden's annual picnic was the most exciting day of the year in Lanark village. Excitements were not frequent in pretty Lanark, nor holidays many. There were Sundays, to be sure — Sunday goes everywhere; Christmas, observed in simple country fashion; Lady-day, when rents came due and servants changed places; Shrove Tuesday, conspicuous for pancakes; and Good Friday, when all the world

went to church except the Independent Baptists, who (there being nothing else doing) sat at home and found the day long and dull. But none of these, the children thought, compared in interest with Miss Alicia's picnic. It was *their* day, and grown people, except Miss Alicia, had nothing whatever to do with it.

Miss Alicia Belden was a retired sugar-baker. The taste for gingerbread is universal as that for freedom. Miss Alicia's gingerbread came as near to being good as British gingerbread can be. It looked like bar-soap, but it did not taste like that; and the youth of Lanark, having never known the delicious American article made of molasses, voted it prime and consumed it in enormous quantities. Buns and turnovers also did Miss Alicia make; cheese-cakes, which melted in the mouth; tea-cakes, with currant eyes; and toffy, which won praise even from London visitors. No wonder, then, that her trade prospered, and that by the time she was fifty, and her earliest

customers staid men and women with gingerbread-eating boys and girls of their own, she was able, as the newspapers say, to "retire on a competence." This competence was not a large one, but it left a margin for what Miss Alicia called "pleasures," chief among which was the annual picnic she gave all the children of the village. Every one was included, even the little Independent Baptists. Some of Miss Alicia's friends thought that this was going too far. But she would listen to no remonstrances.

"What!" she said, "go and leave any of the poor dears behind to cry their eyes out at home! I could n't enjoy the day a bit if I did — not one bit." So all the children went.

Helm Island, six miles off at sea, being the picnicking place, the day always began with a sail in a wheezy little steam-tug chartered by Miss Alicia. It left Lanark according to the tide. On this day which I am going to tell about, the tide served at half-past nine in the morning, and

there was great hurry and confusion in the village households to get the little ones dressed and ready in time. Some of the children had been up at daybreak to see what sort of day it was going to be. These thought the older folks unusually late and slow. They danced about, impatiently begging everybody to make haste, to hurry, or they should certainly be left behind; in which case — but here they stopped; imagination could go no farther than that frightful possibility!

"Put on your blue frock, Nancy," said Mrs. Sarkie; "not the pink-sprigged. That lass of the Spences 'll likely wear her sprigged, and I 'd not wish to have you look as if you dressed alike, or was any way connected, and the families not speaking as they do."

"Yes, indeed, Mother," responded Nancy, with a little toss of her head; "I'd be sorry at that too. Nancy Spence is always getting things like mine. I wish she would n't. It 's just as if she did it a-purpose."

"Not that I wish to say aught against the lass," went on Mrs. Sarkie. "She 's well enough, and so was her mother afore her; a good-natured lass her mother was at school, years back. Nobody denies that. But after the way Farmer Spence has behaved and all, no one would wish to liken you together in any sort; it is n't natural, and I 'm sure your father would n't want it."

On the farther side of the village, toward the east, in another big, substantial red-brick farmhouse, set about with thick orchards and waving fields of grain, Mrs. Spence was fastening *her* Nancy's frock, blue also.

"The pink sprig is the freshest," she said, "but it 's just like that one of Nancy Sarkie's, which she 'll be sure to wear, so I 'd rather have you in this. 'T ain't worth while to be imitating neighbors that is n't neighborly — that 's my opinion."

"Nancy Sarkie is a cross, stuck-up thing!" said Nancy Spence. "What do you think she

said one day at school, Mother? — that her father's folks in London 'd have nothing to do with low people like us Spences! Ought she to have said that? Is n't Father as good as the Sarkies?"

"Set her up, indeed!" cried Mrs. Spence, flushing. "*As* good? I should think so. I never yet heard tell of a Sarkie as could hold his head higher than a Spence. Why, Nancy, your father's uncle in Bristol, as died so rich, kept his own carriage — carriage *and* horses!"

"Did he?" said Nancy, eagerly. "I 'll tell Nancy Sarkie that next time she boasts. You can't think how rude she is sometimes, Mother. Last picnic she gave me a great shove and most pushed me down. What makes her act so?"

"Some of the father's blood in her, I guess," replied Mrs. Spence. "Her mother was a good girl enough before she wedded him. Ah! your father could tell tales. He 's had cause to know

what Sarkie is, if ever man had. But never mind that now, Nancy; we won't rake up trouble this day of all days in the year."

She tied Nancy's hat ribbons firmly as she spoke, and gave her hair a last smooth.

"Good-bye, Mother. Oh! you're putting on your bonnet. Are you going to walk down with me?"

"To be sure I am. I want to see you safe off."

The dock was crowded when they reached it. Far below in the basin floated the tug, and the sailors were placing a plank with hand-rails for the children to pass over. Presently, a stream of little figures began to pour across it to the deck.

"I declare," pouted Nancy Sarkie, "there's that Spence girl in blue after all. Isn't it too bad, Mother?"

"Yes. I wish now you'd worn the sprig," said Mrs. Sarkie. "But never let it matter; you can enjoy yourself all the same if she is in blue."

"No, I can't. I don't like to have her setting herself up to dress like me," said Nancy.

Her face was quite clouded as she walked slowly down the plank.

"Ts, ts, ts!" clicked Mrs. Spence between her teeth. "That Sarkie lass has on the blue frock like yours. Well, well! If there was time, Nancy, you should run home and change."

"There is n't," replied Nancy, with a little scowl. "I don't care, Mother. She can't *be* me, even if we have both got on blue frocks. Nobody 'll mistake us for each other."

With a laugh she ran down the plank. The tug gave three screeching whistles as a signal to belated comers. At the sound, a woman who was walking along the shore with two boys began to run.

"Just in time," said the captain, as she handed the little fellows down to him.

Then the whistle sounded once more, the paddles revolved, the children raised their voices in a

shrill cheer, and the boat moved away. The day of pleasure was begun.

Seated on either side the deck, the two Nancys glared gloomily across. Why did they dislike each other so much? I don't think either could have told. The ill-feeling between the families had begun years ago, when the girls were babies, and nobody now recollected exactly how it began. There was something about a bit of land and right of way, something about a trespassing pig, somebody had called somebody else hard names—who or what did n't matter; it was a good thorough quarrel, one of the sort which the ill-natured imps delight in, and the children, as children will, threw themselves into the warfare with a zeal surpassing that of their elders. Pride and ill-humor are not pleasant things to carry to a picnic, and it might be predicted in advance that the two Nancys were not likely to have a perfectly agreeable day.

The first trouble came soon after landing,

when Nancy Spence by mistake lifted the wrong basket.

"Put that down!" said Nancy Sarkie, sharply. "Miss Alicia told *me* to carry that. You've no business to touch it."

Nancy Spence was a year older than the other Nancy, and a good deal taller; but she was also gentler and more easily cowed. She dropped the basket quickly, and said confusedly:

"I did n't know — I did n't mean to ——"

"Oh, yes!" replied Nancy Sarkie, tauntingly — "did n't know! did n't mean to! That 's the way you always go on, Nancy Spence — meddling, always meddling! Everybody knows that."

"No such thing," said the larger Nancy; "I don't meddle. You 've no call to talk to me like that."

So the dispute proceeded, Nancy Sarkie repeating that Nancy Spence was a meddler, and she retorting that Nancy Sarkie was a spitfire.

"Girls, what is the matter?" said Miss Alicia,

overhearing them. "Let Nancy alone, Nancy Sarkie. You began it, I know; you always do. What does ail you to provoke each other always? Come with me one of you. I shall keep you separate if there is n't an end to this barking and biting and calling of names." Saying which she marched Nancy Spence away.

Nancy Sarkie was left behind. The pretty island lay before her with its plumy trees and stretches of yellow beach. Behind was the sea, dimpled and shining; overhead, the blue sky and the sun; but she looked at none of these fair things. Her heart was sullen and heavy; the bright did not seem bright just then — the blue sky might as well have been gray. She did not care for the woods and beaches, or for the shells which she had looked forward to gathering. We can never enjoy anything unless the enjoyment is inside ourselves, ready to come out when called; though, when that is the case, we enjoy almost everything. Nancy found this true that morning.

She set her basket on the ground, and stood as in a dream, with eyes cast down, and a dull, miserable feeling all over her.

By and by she heard sounds of singing. Up there at the top of the tree-covered bank, the children, she knew, were playing games and having a merry time together. She lifted her basket and climbed the path. Miss Alicia was sitting under the trees with two or three of the older girls. Some of the big boys were lighting a fire. The other children, linked in a great ring, were playing "Here we go round the barberry-bush." It looked gay and cheerful, and everybody seemed to be finding it pleasant except poor, sulky Nancy, who was not in a mood to like anything, whatever it might be.

"Oats, peas, beans" succeeded to "barberry-bush," and "Ruth and Jacob" followed that. Did any of you ever hear of the game of "Ruth and Jacob"? This is the way it was played in Lanark village: All the children made a circle

with clasped hands, except one boy and one girl, who stood in the middle. The boy was blindfolded, the girl not. The blindfolded boy groped about, demanding, "Where is my Ruth?" And the girl had to answer, "Here," but the instant she spoke she glided away to the other side of the circle, so that the boy, following her voice, should not find her. As soon as the girl was caught, she put on the bandage, and a fresh boy took his place in the circle, of whom she demanded, "Where is my Jacob?" The Lanark children were fond of this game, because it gave opportunity for good hearty romping, in which they delighted.

Nancy Sarkie joined in "Ruth and Jacob," but, for the first time, the play seemed to her dull and tiresome. Nancy Spence, too, was out of sorts. Miss Alicia had read her a lecture on quarrelling, and, feeling as she did that she was all in the right and Nancy Sarkie all in the wrong, the lecture made her very cross. Neither she nor Nancy Sarkie spoke during the game, and when

they looked at each other it was not in a pleasant way at all.

Meantime, Miss Alicia, aided by the older girls, was unpacking great baskets of bread and meat, and arranging veal pies, tartlets, sweet-cakes, and ginger-beer bottles on four big white tablecloths laid on the ground in the shade. All these good things were provided by Miss Alicia, who liked to do everything herself at *her* picnic, and never allowed anybody else to contribute.

By the time the feast was ready, the children were ready for it. What with "Ruth and Jacob" and the fresh sea air, they were hungry as wolves and crowded round the tables. Such a demolishing of veal pies and devouring of bread and butter was never seen before. It took some time to settle who should sit here and who there, to distribute the food and make sure that no one was left out; but Miss Alicia was experienced in picnics, and before long all was nicely arranged, and the fifty little jaws were wagging in happy

concert. The meal passed off with entire success until cake-time came. There was one loaf with pink icing, on which all the party had fixed admiring eyes. When this loaf was cut and distributed, it chanced that Nancy Spence got a bit, but before it reached Nancy Sarkie the last morsel was gone.

"Never mind," said Miss Alicia, cutting another loaf. "This is the same cake exactly, only with white sugar instead of pink. Here's a piece for you, Nancy Sarkie."

"I don't want any," replied Nancy, crossly.

"It's velly good," remarked little Polly Darton, with her mouth full. "Do take some, Nancy."

"No," muttered Nancy; "I can get white cake at home. I wanted some of the pink, but there was n't enough. There was plenty for Nancy Spence though. Miss Alicia made sure of that, 'cause *she*'s a favorite."

"Nonsense," said Miss Alicia, who caught the words. "It's nothing of the sort. Take some

cake, Nancy; don't be foolish. You won't? You're as obstinate as a goat, I declare. I tell you what, Nancy Sarkie — if you can't be pleasant and good-humored, you'd better not come on *my* picnics. I shall just leave you out next time."

The children gazed at Nancy with round eyes full of horror when Miss Alicia said this. How very bad she must be, they thought, to be shut out from the picnics. Nancy herself was frightened. She choked and strangled. A lump came into her throat. Presently a big tear, hopping down her nose, splashed into her plate; and vexed that the other girls should see her crying, she jumped up and fled down the bank and on to the beach.

It was afternoon now, and the yellow sun on the water shone dazzling and bright. The tide was coming in, fast but noiselessly, each wave running a little higher on the sand than the last, tracing its soft wet mark, and slipping back again into the lap of the sea with a tiny splash like a

baby's laugh. Here and there lay beautiful little shells, pink and yellow, or striped in faint lines of red and brown. Helm Island was famous for these shells; the children looked forward to picking them up as one of the chief pleasures of the picnic. But Nancy plodded past the shells and over them, and did not stoop to lift one from the sand. On and on she went to the very end of the beach, then over a little rocky point to a second and longer one. The sun lay hot on the sand, and the breeze seemed to have died away, but still she marched forward till the second beach also was passed. She was on the north side of the island now. It was bolder than the other side, with rocks and cliffs, but few trees grew near the shore, and Nancy, who was getting tired, saw no shady place in which to rest. At last she spied a point of land on which grew several pine-trees. The point jutted into the water for quite a distance, and the sea had eaten away the sand on either side and behind, so that

at high tide the point was a little island and quite cut off from the shore. The tide was not more than half high now, however; besides, one of the pine-trees had fallen across the passage, making a narrow bridge over which it was easy to walk.

Nancy's head was steady, and she trod the bridge without fear, looking down at the sand five or six feet below without turning giddy in the least. The pine-tree shade was delightful after her hot walk. She sat down on the ground, which was carpeted with fine brown needles, warm and soft. Here the breeze blew strong and cool, the waves lapped and rippled with a soothing sound. By and by Nancy's head sank on her arm, she curled herself comfortably on the pine-needles, and before she knew it she was asleep. The wind rocked, the sea sang its lullaby, and both took care that she should not awaken again in a hurry.

How long she slept she did not know. She roused suddenly and with a start, to wonder

where she was and how she came to be there. I fear the angels who watched her slumbers were not of the right sort, for instead of waking pleasantly she was thoroughly out of humor. Her neck and shoulder ached from lying on the ground, and she felt stiff. The first thing that popped into her mind as she roused was Miss Alicia's reproof.

"It was Nancy Spence's fault," she said half aloud. "She 's always doing provoking things, and then people think it 's me. Miss Alicia *does* have favorites, and I shall just tell mother what she said to me. Mother 'll be real vexed, I know she will. Mother 'll take my part against the Spences."

These amiable reflections were interrupted by the sight of a figure on the beach, so far away as to seem like a mere dot against the sand. As it drew near it grew larger. Nancy made out, first that it was a girl, next that the girl was picking up shells (for the figure stooped and rose, and

stooped again as it walked), then that the girl had on a blue dress, and lastly (her eyes dilated as she looked), that it was the girl she disliked most! Nancy Spence, the rival Nancy, was coming along the shore!

The moment she made this discovery, Nancy Sarkie slipped behind a pine-tree and hid herself. From this covert she watched the approaching foe. Nancy Spence drew nearer. She had a basket on her arm, in which she placed the shells as fast as she picked them up. As she walked she hummed a tune. This somehow struck the hidden Nancy as a wrong and insult to herself. Why should Nancy Spence be having such a good time when she had not? It seemed too much to bear!

Before long, Nancy spied the piny islet and the fallen tree. She was as much delighted as the other Nancy had been earlier in the afternoon.

"What a pretty little island," she said out loud, "with a bridge and all! I mean to call it mine.

Nobody has found it out but me, because nobody else has come so far along the beach."

She set her foot on the pine-trunk to cross over. The water was curling below now. It was not deep, but it seemed so, and gurgled and splashed in a noisy and suggestive manner. Nancy looked down a second, hesitating. When she raised her eyes she gave a great jump, for there, at the other end of the bridge, stood Nancy Sarkie, flushed and wrathful.

"Go back!" she cried. "How dare you call this your island? It's mine. I found it first, and you sha'n't come on it at all."

"Yes, I will," said Nancy, flushing up also. "I've just as much right as you have. I found it too, and I didn't know you were here at all. I'm just as good as you are, Nancy Sarkie."

"No, you're not. My father said once that your father was a boor. I heard him. And my uncle in London lives in a big house, with *beau*-tiful things all over it; and he'd not have

anything to do with such people as you Spences are. So there now!"

"My father's uncle kept a carriage and the most splendid horses as was ever seen. He was a great deal better than your uncle is. And my father's not a boor. He's good old stock, Father is; there isn't any Sarkie can hold a candle to us Spences. I've heard people say so. So there now, Nancy Sarkie!"

"Anyhow, you sha'n't come on *my* island. I won't let you."

"*You* won't let me! *You*, indeed! I tell you I will come."

Both girls ran forward. They met in the middle of the bridge. "Go back!" "I won't!" There was a push — a struggle. Nancy Spence's foot slipped. She recovered herself. It slipped again. She staggered — fell — dragging Nancy Sarkie with her, and the foolish children rolled together off the log and into the sea!

The shock and the wetting cooled their anger

and brought them to their senses. The water where they fell was about two feet deep, and they scrambled out without much difficulty; but both were thoroughly soaked, both felt cold and miserable, and both began to cry.

"It's all your fault," spluttered Nancy Sarkie, spitting out a mouthful of salt water.

"That is n't true; you pushed me, or we should n't either of us have fallen," sobbed Nancy Spence.

"Ow! ow! I'm all wet and nasty, and so freezing cold," blubbered the lesser Nancy. "I did n't push you — you pushed me."

"Oh, dear, my frock!" sighed Nancy Spence, deplorably, trying to wring it out. "Why don't you squeeze your clothes, Nancy Sarkie, and get out all the water you can? You 'll take a cold else."

"I don't know how," said Nancy Sarkie, touching the wet gown helplessly with the points of her fingers. "If I do take cold it 'll be all your fault. I shall tell Miss Alicia so."

Nancy Spence was on the point of offering to help wring the wet dress, but at this speech she forbore.

"I shall tell Miss Alicia, too," she said, shutting her lips tight together.

Then she seized her basket, out of which all the shells were fallen, and began to walk away. Nancy Sarkie, dripping like a fountain, followed.

What a long, dismal walk that was! It seemed twice as far as it had seemed in the morning. The girls' clothes felt heavy, their shoes stuck to the sand and dragged them down. The sun was hot still, and though the exercise gradually warmed their chilly limbs, it was all hard work, and only pride prevented either Nancy from flinging herself down and declaring that she could go no farther and must rest. Side by side they toiled over the point of rocks which shut off the second beach, and from which they looked to see the tug, and the children playing on the sand. They reached the top and stood aghast. *No tug was there!* It

had gone from the shore, and presently, far off at sea, they spied a tiny curl of rising smoke. Then they knew all, — Miss Alicia had forgotten them, or miscounted, and had sailed, leaving them behind. They were alone upon the island — all alone! What *should* they do?

Nancy Sarkie flung herself down on the ground in a paroxysm of despair. The other Nancy stood upright and looked about her. A tear rolled down her face. She wiped it away with the back of her hand. For a time no sound was heard but the lapping of the water and the muffled sobs of Nancy Sarkie. At last, Nancy Spence glanced down at the wretched little crumpled heap beside her, and trying to make her voice sound brave, said:

"There 's no use crying. Don't lie there, Nancy. You 'll catch an awful cold. Let us run on and see if the fire the boys lit has gone out. If it has n't, we can dry ourselves."

"Oh, Mother, Mother! We shall die — I know

we shall die!" moaned Nancy Sarkie, who, for all her perversity and fierce speeches, was helpless as a baby the moment trouble came. Nancy Spence was of more courageous stuff.

"Oh, no," she said, "we sha' n't die. They 'll find out as soon as they land that we 're left behind, and send somebody for us. Come, Nancy — come with me and see about the fire."

Nancy Sarkie suffered herself to be coaxed from her crouching position at last, and they went on down the beach. The boys had pulled apart the brands the last thing before they sailed, but the fire smouldered still. Judiciously fanned and fed with dry twigs, it soon flamed up brightly. Searching for fuel, the girls lighted on other treasures — a hard egg, a piece of thick bread and butter, and a scrap of cake, to which still clung a fragment of rosy icing.

"That 's the pink cake I did n't have any of," said Nancy Sarkie.

"Well, you shall have all of this; I don't want any," replied Nancy Spence, good-naturedly.

She felt sorry for the other Nancy, and did not find it hard to speak pleasantly now.

"What's that dark thing under the bush?" she cried. "Oh, Nancy, Nancy! is n't this good? Here's that old blanket that Miss Alicia had round the hamper. They've forgotten and left it behind. Now we shall hardly be cold a bit."

Their dresses were more than half dry by this time, which was fortunate, for the sun was setting and the evening growing chill. Side by side the two cuddled under the blanket close to the fire. It was not *very* warm, it must be confessed, for while the heat scorched their faces, their backs were always conscious of a creeping chill. Desert islands, I rather think, are not comfortable places except now and then in a story-book. The girls lay without speaking for a long time; then Nancy Spence heard a tiny sob close to her ear, which made her turn over in surprise.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?" cried she, forgetting all cause of quarrel, and speaking as kindly as if Nancy Sarkie had been any other girl.

"Oh, it's so miserable! I keep thinking about wolves and robbers, and wishing my mother were here."

The wretched, tearful face rolled over on to Nancy's shoulder. Nancy put her arms out to the sobbing child, and the other Nancy clung tight.

"Don't cry — don't," said Nancy Spence, soothingly. "There aren't any wolves or robbers on Helm Island, I'm sure; and we'll see our mothers again to-morrow. Don't cry."

"How kind you are!" said the little Nancy, wondering. "I didn't know you ever could be so good. I used to be real hateful to you, Nancy. But I'm sorry now."

"I was hateful, too, and I'm sorry."

"I'll not be so any more," murmured Nancy Sarkie. "I like you now, ever so much. But you'll never like me, because I acted so."

"Oh, yes, I will. I like you a great deal better already. I like you very much indeed."

The two Nancys kissed one another.

"I 'm getting sleepy," whispered Nancy Sarkie.

Meanwhile, on the dock at Lanark, six miles away, a heartrending scene was taking place. No sooner had Miss Alicia landed and marshalled her flock than she discovered that two were missing. Mrs. Sarkie and Mrs. Spence were in great distress, but scarcely greater than poor Miss Alicia, who tearfully protested that she could n't think how it happened; such a thing never did before. Farmer Spence and Farmer Sarkie hurried to and fro, questioning, consulting, discussing; the smaller children cried, and all the town was in a ferment.

It was finally decided that a sailboat should at once set out for Helm Island.

"I shall go, of course," said Mr. Sarkie.

"And I shall go," asserted Mr. Spence.

He spoke like one who expects contradiction; but

no one disputed him, and the boat pushed out, the two fathers seated side by side in the stern. The wind was a fair one and blew them swiftly along.

"What could keep the lasses from starting with the rest?" said Mr. Sarkie.

He was too anxious to observe the fact that he had included his enemy's daughter with his own under the general term of "the lasses."

"God send we find 'em safe," groaned Farmer Spence.

The sail seemed a long one to the anxious men, but was in fact short, for they reached Helm Island in less than two hours. No sooner had the keel of the boat grazed the sand than the two fathers sprang out and hurried up the beach.

"We 'll search this side before we try the other," said Farmer Spence. "The cliffs are all over that way. There are none here."

"What 's that?" cried Farmer Sarkie.

It was the glimmer of the fire which had caught his eye. They hurried forward. There,

close to the flickering embers, was a dark heap, which rustled and stirred. Farmer Spence stooped and lifted a corner of the blanket. There lay the two children, clasped tight in each other's arms, and fast asleep.

"Merciful Lord! Here they are!" he said huskily.

The sound roused the Nancys. They moved — started — sat up.

"Oh, oh! what is it? Who are you? Father! It's my father, Nancy!"

"And mine, too!" And the Nancys, lifted each into the arms of her own special parent, kissed and clung and cried.

"Oh, it's been dreadful," sobbed Nancy Sarkie, "but Nancy Spence was so brave — a great deal braver than me, Father. She wrapped me up and dried my clothes, and was *so* kind."

"We're going to be friends now, Father," broke in Nancy Spence. "I never knew what a nice girl Nancy Sarkie was before. We may

be friends, may n't we? You don't mind, do you, Father?" And she and Nancy Sarkie took hold of each other's hands.

The two farmers regarded each other by the light of the moon. Farmer Sarkie cleared his throat once or twice. Then:

"Neighbor," he said, "we've been at loggerheads now these twelve years or more. I won't say who was right in the matter, or who was wrong, but only this: If you're so minded, we'll strike hands here and end the matter. These girls of ours set us an example."

"You're in the right of it, neighbor," replied Farmer Spence. "There's my hand, and it sha' n't be my fault if we fall out again."

The Nancys hugged each other.

So ended the famous Spence and Sarkie quarrel, and, in spite of fright and wetting, four light hearts sailed back across the dark sea that night to Lanark village.



THE FOX AND THE STORK

THE FOX AND THE STORK

IN St. Nicholas for September, 1876, I saw an illustration, by Gustave Doré, of the well-known fable of the "Fox and the Stork," and it reminded me of something that happened less than one hundred years ago. You shall hear the story.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" crowed the red cock, youngest, handsomest, and earliest riser of all the cocks in the poultry-yard. His rival, the old yellow cock, had gone to roost overnight with the full determination to be first up the next morning. But age is sleepy, and his head was still under his wing when the challenge of his victorious foe rang out upon the air. Being second is next best to being first, however, so he, too, flapped his wings, crowed loudly, sprang from the perch, followed by his wives and chil-

dren, and in five minutes, clucking and cackling, the poultry-yard was alive with motion, and the chicken-day had fairly begun.

Wasp, the red terrier, heard the noise through his slumbers, yawned, stretched himself, turned around once or twice as if to make sure that his tail was where he left it the night before; then, jumping against the side of the house, he barked lustily. Half a minute later a window above opened, and a red object was thrust out. This red object was Rufus Swift's head, shaggy from sleep and not yet combed and brushed for the day.

"Hurray!" he cried. "No rain after all! Wasp, stop barking! Do you hear me, sir? You'll wake Mother and give her a headache, and I want her in good-humor this day of all days."

Wasp understood the tone, if not the words, and changed his bark to a low whine. Rufus drew in his head, and proceeded to wash and

dress as fast as possible. He had many plans on foot and much to do, for this was the day on which his schoolfellow, Leggy Beekman, was to make him a visit.

Leggy's real name was Leggett, but as a schoolboy he was bound to have a nickname, and being of a tall, spare figure, "Leggy" struck the other boys as rather a happy allusion to facts. Rufus had been but a few months at the school, and he and Leggett were almost strangers, but, finding that their homes were near each other, Rufus made the most of the acquaintance, and teased his mother for leave to ask Leggett to spend a day, till at last she consented.

Mrs. Swift was a timid old lady, who dreaded boys and noise and confusion generally. She regarded Leggett as a formidable person, for when she asked Rufus what he would like by way of an entertainment for his friend, he answered, without hesitation: "A rat-hunt, a sail on the lake, and tickets for the juggler."

"Oh, dear me!" cried poor Mrs. Swift. "I 'll send you to see the juggler and welcome, Rufy, but a rat-hunt! How can boys like such things! Are you sure Master Beekman does?"

"Why, Mother, of course, all boys like 'em," replied Rufus, purposely vague, for in truth he knew little about Leggett's likings and dislikings. "Rat-hunts are prime fun. And this is a prime time to have one, for the south barn is just swarming. Wasp and Fury 'll pitch into 'em like sixty."

"Then that lake — I do dread it so much," went on Mrs. Swift; "it always seemed dangerous to me. Don't you think your friend would like something else just as well?"

"Fudge about danger," said disrespectful Rufus. "Now, Mother, don't forget, please. I won't have Beekman at all unless we can have a good time. You said I might take my choice and do just what I wanted the day he came, and I choose the rat-hunt and the sail and the juggler."

Mrs. Swift sighed and submitted. After all, it was only kind in Rufus to plan to give his schoolmate the things he enjoyed, she thought. She liked to have him unselfish and hospitable. But there was little hospitality in Rufus' thoughts, and no unselfishness. His plans were for his own benefit, not Leggett's, and he had no idea of consulting anybody's tastes but his own.

About eleven o'clock the visitor arrived. Mrs. Swift came downstairs rather timidly; a boy who preferred sailing and rat-hunting to anything else must, she thought, be an alarming fellow. But Leggett did not look alarming in the least. He was a tall, loose-jointed, long-limbed boy, with a narrow, sallow face, hooked nose, and a pair of dark, short-sighted eyes. He had a way of putting his head close to things in order to see them, which gave him an odd, solemn appearance not at all boylike. But, in spite of this and his awkward figure, he was a gentlemanly lad, and his

bow and pleasant way of speaking made Mrs. Swift many degrees less afraid of him before he had been five minutes in the room.

Stout, active, freckled little Rufus danced about his guest, and would scarcely give him time to speak, so impatient was he to begin the day.

"Oh, come along, Leggy," he broke in, "you'll see my mother at dinner. Don't waste time talking now. Come out with me to the barn."

"The barn?" said Leggett, squinting up his eyes to make out the subject of a print which hung on the wall.

"Yes; we're going to have a rat-hunt, you know. My dogs, Wasp and Fury, are great on rats, and I've set Jack, our farm-boy, to poke out the holes, and it'll be prime fun. Come along."

Leggett hesitated, and Mrs. Swift detected a look which was not all of pleasure.

"Perhaps Master Beekman would rather do

something else——" she began, but Rufus pulled at his guest's arm, and cried:

"Mother, what rubbish——" and Leggett, too polite to resist, followed to the barn.

Jack was in waiting with the terriers. The doors were closed, the dogs sniffed and whined, Jack poked and pried in the holes. Presently a rat sprang out, then another, and confusion dire set in. Squeaking wildly, the terrified rats ran to and fro, the dogs in full chase, Jack hallooing them on and "jabbing" with a stick, Rufus, wild with excitement, clattering after. Dust rose from the floor in clouds, the lofts above echoed the din, and so entirely was Rufus absorbed by the sport that it was not until half an hour had passed, and three rats lay dead upon the ground, that he remembered the existence of his visitor, and only then because he happened to stumble over his legs. Leggett was sitting in the corner on an inverted corn-measure, looking rather pale.

"Hallo, Beekman, are you there? Why don't you pitch in?" remarked Rufus. "It's famous fun, isn't it? You don't mean to say you don't like it?"

"Not much," said Leggett. "I don't like to see things killed."

"Ho! That's a good one. Jack, hear this. Here's a boy who don't like to see things killed."

"As I don't," went on Leggett, "perhaps you'll excuse me if I leave you to finish the rats alone. I'll sit with your mother, or wait under the trees till you get through."

Leggett's manner was so polite that it reminded Rufus to be polite also.

"No, hang it," he said. "If you don't care for it, we'll put off the hunt till another day. What a queer chap you are!" he continued, as they went along; "you're not a bit like the rest of the fellows. Why don't you like to see rats killed?"

"I don't know. They are nuisances, of course,

but it strikes me as a low sort of fun to enjoy seeing their fright and hearing them squeak."

"My eye! How mighty and genteel we are! What *does* your worship like, may I ask, if rats are too 'low' to suit?"

"It was rude of me to use the word," said Leggett, apologetically. "Excuse me, Rufus. What shall we do next?"

"Oh, we'll take a sail," said Rufus, whose programme had been exactly laid out beforehand. "There's the boat, under the trees. I'll take you up to the head of the lake."

"Sailing?" said Leggett. "I'm sorry, Rufus, but I can't."

"Can't? Why not?"

"Why, you see, I'm under a promise not to go on the water."

"A promise! Stuff! What sort of a promise?" cried Rufus, who could not bear to be put out.

Leggett blushed painfully.

"The promise is to my mother," he said, speaking with an effort. "My father was drowned, you see, and she has a great fear of the water for me. I gave her my word that I would n't get into a sailboat, and I must keep it."

"Oh, if that 's all," said Rufus, "come along. My mother fidgets just so — all women do; but it 's nonsense. There 's old Tom hoisting the sail. You 'll be as safe as if on dry land. And your mother 'll never know — come on."

"I thought you heard me say that I had given my word," said Leggett, seating himself deliberately under a tree.

"Confound your promises!" exclaimed Rufus, angrily; "I 'm not going to lose *my* sail, any way. I don't get leave often, and Tom is n't to be had every day, so if you won't go I shall just go without you."

"Pray do," said Leggett. "I will sit here and watch you off."

Rufus was too hot and vexed to realize what

an uncivil thing he was doing. Without another word he bounded down the bank, sprang into the boat, and in five minutes her white sail was speeding up the lake. Leggett lay under the trees a while, then walked to the house, and when, two hours later, Rufus sought for him, he was found bending his short-sighted eyes over a book, which he had taken from the shelf in the parlor.

"You've had a dull time, I'm afraid," said Rufus, feeling some belated pricks of conscience.

"Oh, no," replied Leggett; "I've done very well. This is a book I was wishing to see."

"I'll lend it you if you like," said Rufus, generous enough in things which cost him nothing. Leggett accepted the offer amicably, and matters went smoothly till dinner-time.

"Have you had a pleasant morning?" asked old Mrs. Swift, as she carved the roast goose.

"Splendid," said Rufus. Leggett said nothing.

"And a nice sail?" she continued, amiably desirous to be civil to Rufus' friend.

"First-rate," answered Rufus, and again Leggett was silent.

"And now you're to see the jugglers," went on the old lady. "Rufy, you'll find the tickets on the chimney-piece, back of your pa's daguerreotype."

"All right, Mother," said Rufus, and Leggett looked pleased, for, as it happened, he had never seen a juggler.

But, alas! Jack wanted to speak to Rufus after dinner, and Rufus went off with him to the barn for half an hour, so, though the friends walked fast to the town, they reached the show so late that they had to take back seats. This did not matter to Rufus, but it mattered very much indeed to Leggett, whose short sight prevented him from seeing anything clearly.

"What is it? What did he do? I could not make it out," he would ask, while Rufus, jumping up and down with delight, ejaculated: "Famous! Capital! I never saw anything so good."

"Do try to tell me. What was it he did?"

"Oh, such a queer game! He stuck a handkerchief inside a bottle, you see," — but just then the conjurer proceeding to pound a lady's watch in a mortar, Rufus forgot his unfinished sentence, and poor Leggett never learned what became of the pocket-handkerchief. This fate followed him through the entire performance, which left him with a headache, a pair of smarting eyes, and a mind full of puzzles.

Tea, muffins, cakes, and country sweetmeats of all sorts were awaiting them at the Red Farm, and kind old Mrs. Swift hoping they had enjoyed themselves, Rufus energetically declared that he had. After tea, Leggett's pony was brought around, and he said good-bye, asking Rufus to come over the next week and spend a day with him.

"I can't offer you any sailing; you know why," he said good-humoredly. "But I shall be glad to see you."

"All right," said Rufus. "I'll be sure to come. Thursday, you said?"

"Yes; Thursday."

The boys parted, and Leggett trotted away.

Leggett's mother listened to his account of the visit with a smile which was shrewd and a little malicious. She was, like her boy, thin of figure, long of face, with the same keen nose and short-sighted eyes.

"Hum! Rat-hunting, sailing, a juggler!" she said. "Master Swift fancies these things himself, I imagine. The little fox! Well, what will you do to amuse him when he returns your visit?"

"I'm not sure. What would be best, Mamma?"

"Let me see," and Mrs. Beekman's eyes twinkled wickedly. "There are your microscopic objects, — you could show him those, and your medals and your cabinet of shells. And — yes, the very thing! Professor Peters gives his chemical lecture in the afternoon. That will be

sure to be interesting; you remember how much you liked the others."

"So I did!" cried Leggett. "That will be first-rate, won't it? Only," his face falling, "perhaps Rufus might think it dull. He's such an active fellow."

"Oh, he may like it," said his mother. "He ought to. If he knows nothing about chemistry, it will all be new to him. And there is a good deal of popping and exploding in the course of the experiments; all boys enjoy that. We'll settle it so, Leggett, — all your curiosities for the morning, and the lecture in the afternoon."

"Very well," said Leggett, unsuspectingly; while his mother, who had much ado not to laugh, kept her face perfectly serious, lest he should guess her mischievous intention.

Rufus, for once in his life, felt awkward, as he walked into Mrs. Beekman's parlor. His own home was comfortable and handsome, but here were all sorts of things which he was not used to

see, — pictures, busts, globes, cabinets of fossils and stones, stuffed birds, and instruments of which he did not know the name or use. Leggett's father had been a man of science; his wife shared his tastes, and had carefully trained her son's mind in the same direction. Rufus glanced at these strange objects out of the corners of his eyes, and felt oddly sheepish as Mrs. Beekman, tall and dignified, came forward to shake hands with him.

"Leggett will be here in a moment," she said; "he was busy in arranging a fly's wing on one of his microscope glasses. Ah, here he is."

As she spoke, Leggett hurried into the room.

The boys shook hands. There was a little talk; then Mrs. Beekman said graciously:

"Perhaps your friend would like to see your room, Leggett, and your collections. Take him upstairs; but don't get so absorbed as to forget that to-day we dine early, in order to leave time for the lecture."

Leggett's room was a pleasant little study, fitted up with presses and book-shelves. It had a large, delightful window looking out into the tree-tops. His bed-chamber opened from it, and both were cozy and convenient as heart of boy could wish. Leggett was fond of his rooms, and proud to exhibit them to one of his school-fellows.

"See," he said. "Here are my books, and my shells, and my coins, and here I keep my plaster medals. And this is my mineral cabinet. Would you like to look over the minerals?"

"No, thank you; I don't care much for stones," said Rufus.

"Well, here's my microscope," said Leggett, "and I've got some splendid slides! Take this chair, Rufus; it's just the right height for the glass."

Rufus rather unwillingly took the chair, and Leggett proceeded to exhibit and explain his beloved specimens, expatiating on chalk-shells,

moth-wings and *infusoria*, till, suddenly, a great, noisy yawn on the part of Rufus made him desist with a jump.

"I'm afraid this is boring you," he said, in an embarrassed tone.

"Well, rather," confessed Rufus, with a dreadful frankness.

"Would you rather see my medals, then?" asked Leggett, pulling out a drawer. But Rufus could not be induced to show any interest in the medals beyond calling the Emperor Commodus "the old chap with a nose"; so Leggett, discomfited, shut the drawer again. Shells and coins were equally unsuccessful, and Leggett was at his wits' end to know what to do next, when the ringing of the dinner-bell relieved him of his perplexity.

Perhaps Mrs. Beekman had a guess as to how the morning had gone, Rufus came downstairs looking so bored, and Leggett so tired and anxious; but she was very attentive and civil, gave

large helps of everything, and as Rufus' appetite was not at all impaired by his sufferings, dinner passed off with great success, excepting in the case of a dainty little dish of frogs' legs, stewed delicately in a nice brown gravy. Leggett and his mother were foreign enough in their tastes to like this out-of-the-way dainty; but Rufus, who had never seen such before, was horrified.

"Frogs!" he cried. "I thought nobody but cranes, and birds like that, ate frogs. What would my mother say?"

"'Cranes, and birds like that,' show very good taste, then," remarked Mrs. Beekman, helping herself composedly. But Rufus could not be persuaded to touch the frogs' legs.

The dessert was hurried a little, Mrs. Beekman remarking that they must make haste in order to miss none of the lecture, while Leggett eagerly explained what a delightful treat lay before them.

"Dr. Peters is a great gun, you know," he said. "Some of the experiments in the other

lectures have been splendid. You'd like to go, Rufus? There's all sorts of fizzing and popping, and green-and-red flames, and interesting things."

"Ye–es," replied Rufus; but if ever a boy's face expressed dismay his did at that moment. The prospect of possible pops and fizzes alone enabled him to meet the proposal with common politeness.

Poor Rufus. It was indeed a black afternoon for him. As it turned out, none of the explosions which Leggett had described occurred in the experiments, and the lecture was full of technical terms and phrases which Leggett, having studied chemistry a good deal, understood, but which were unmeaning to Rufus, who found the whole thing inexpressibly dull. Disconsolate and depressed, he sat swallowing his yawns, while Leggett, forgetting everything else, listened with bright-eyed interest, only turning now and then to his mother for a look of sympathy, quite unconscious of what his guest was enduring. Their

seat was close to the lecturer, so that Leggett could see every step of the process, and his pleasure was thorough and complete.

"It has been interesting, has n't it?" said Mrs. Beekman, on the way home; "or was it a little over your head, Master Rufus? I feared it might be, as you did not hear the rest of the course."

Rufus muttered something indistinct, which nobody could hear, and walked on in sulky silence. In silence he ate his supper; then his horse was brought to the door, and he made ready to go.

"Good-bye," said his hostess; "I hope you 'll come again. Leggett was a little anxious as to how he should entertain you, but I told him he would better just *do as you did*, and let you share the things which he himself liked and enjoyed. A good way, — don't you think so? Good-bye."

And with these words Mamma Beekman dismissed Master Swift to his home.





THE MASTIFF AND HIS MASTER

THE MASTIFF AND HIS MASTER

A certain young mastiff being near dog's estate, his master judged best to trim and shorten his ears. This the mastiff thought hard, and complained accordingly. But as he grew older and met dogs of various tempers, he was often obliged to fight for himself and his rights: then his short ears gave great advantage, for they furnished no hold to the enemies' teeth, while the long-eared dogs, whom he had formerly envied, came from the fray torn and suffering. "Aha!" said the mastiff, "my master knew better than I what was good for me." — *Old Fable.*

"BUT why must n't I?" said Towser.

Towser was not a dog, as you might suppose, but the nickname of a boy. Exactly why his school-fellows should have chosen this nickname for Tom Kane I don't know; perhaps because his brown, short-nosed face was a little like a dog's — perhaps because he was bold and resolute, a good fighter, and tough in defence of his rights and opinions. I hardly think it was this last reason, however. Boys are not much given to analyzing character, and are apt to judge things

and people by a happy-go-lucky instinct, which sometimes leads them right and sometimes wrong. But whatever the reason may have been, Towser was Tom's school-name, and it stuck to him through life. Even his wife called him so, — when he grew up and had a wife, — and the last time I saw him, his little girl was stroking his hair and saying, "Papa Towser," in imitation of her mother. Towser is n't a pretty name, but it sounded pretty from Baby May's lips, and I never heard that Tom objected to the title, either as man or boy.

But to return to the time when he was a boy.

"Why must n't I?" he said again. "All the fellows are going except me, and I 'd like to ever so much."

"It is n't a question of like," answered his father, rather grimly. "It 's a question of can and can't. All the other boys have rich fathers; or, if not rich, they are not poor like me. It 's well enough that their sons should go off on

camping parties. Twenty-five dollars here and twenty there is n't much to any of 'em, but it 's a great deal for you. And what 's more, Tom, there 's this: that if they 'd take you for nothing, it is n't a good thing for you, any way you fix it. I pay for your schooling, and I paid for those boxing lessons, and may be, another year, I 'll manage the subscription to the boat, for I want you to grow up strong and ready with your fists, and your mind, and all parts of you. You 'll have to fight you way, my boy, and I want you to turn out true grit when the tussle comes. But when it 's a case of camping out a week, or extra holidays, or spending money for circuses and minstrels and such trash, I shut down. You 'll be all the better off in the end without this fun and idling and getting your head full of the idea of always having a 'good time.' Work 's what you 're meant for, and if you don't thank me now for bringing you up tough, you will when you 're a man, with maybe a boy of your own."

Mr. Kane was a silent, gruff, long-headed man, who never wasted words, and this, the longest speech he had ever been known to make, impressed Towser not a little. He did say to himself, in a grumbling tone, "Pretty hard, I think, to be cut off so at every turn," but he said it softly, and only once, and before long his face cleared, and, taking his hat, he went to tell the boys that he could n't join the camping party.

"Well, I say it's a confounded shame!" declared Tom White.

"I call your pa real mean," joined in Archie Berkley.

"You'd better not call him anything of the kind while I'm around," said Towser, with an angry look in his eyes, and Archie shrank and said no more. Tom was vexed and sore enough at heart, but he was n't going to let any boy speak disrespectfully of his father.

"I say, though," whispered Harry Blake, getting his arm around Tom's neck, and leading him

away from the others, "I'm real disappointed, old fellow. Could n't it be managed? I'd lend you half the money."

Harry's mother was a widow, well off, and very indulgent, and he had more pocket-money at command than any one else in the school.

Towser shook his head.

"No use," he said. "Father don't want me to go, for more reasons than the money. He says I've got to work hard all my life, and I'd better not get into the way of having good times; it'd soften me, and I'd not do so well by and by."

"How horrid!" cried Harry, with a shudder. "I'm glad Mother does n't talk that way."

Harry Blake was fair and slender, with auburn hair, which waved naturally, and a delicate throat as white as a girl's.

Tom looked at him with a sort of rough, pitying tenderness.

"I'm glad, too," he said. "You'd die if you

had to rough it much, Harry. I'm tougher, you see. It won't hurt me."

A sturdy satisfaction came with these words that almost made up for the disappointment about the camping out.

Still, it was pretty hard to see the boys start without him. Ten days later they returned. The mosquitoes were very thick, they said, and they had n't caught so many fish as they expected. Joe Bryce had hurt his hand with a gun-lock, and Harry Blake was half sick with a cold. Still, they had had a pretty good time on the whole. Mr. Kane listened to this report with a dry twinkle in his eyes.

"Two hundred dollars gone in giving twenty young fellows a 'pretty good' time," he said. "Well, all the fools are n't dead yet. You stick to what you 're about, Towser, my boy."

And Towser did stick, not only then, but again and again as time went on, and first this scheme and then that was started for the amuse-



"At sixteen . . . Towser left school and went into the great Perrin Iron Works." *Page* 205.

ment of the boys. Now it was an excursion to Boston; next, the formation of an amateur rifle company; after that a voyage to the fishing-banks. Every few months something was proposed, which fired Towser's imagination, and made him want to join, but always his father held firm, and he had no share in the frolics. It seemed hard enough, but Mr. Kane was kind as well as strict; he treated his son as if he were already a man, and argued with him from a man's point of view; so, in spite of an occasional outburst or grumble, Towser did not rebel, and his life and ideas gradually moulded themselves to his father's wish.

At sixteen, while most of the other boys were fitting for college, Towser left school and went into the great Perrin Iron Works to learn the business of machine-making. He began at the foot of the ladder; but, being quick-witted and steady, with a natural aptitude for mechanics, he climbed rapidly, and by the time he was twenty

was promoted to a foremanship. Harry Blake came home from college soon after, having graduated with the dignity of a "second dispute," as a quizzical friend remarked, and settled at home, to "read law," he said, but in reality to practise the flute, make water-color sketches and waste a good deal of time in desultory pursuits of various kinds. He was a sweet-tempered, gentlemanly fellow, not strong in health, and not at all fond of study; and Tom, who overtopped him by a head and with one muscular arm could manage him like a child, felt for him the tender deference which strength often pays to weakness. It was almost as if Harry had been a girl; but Tom never thought of it in that light.

So matters went on till Towser was twenty-one, and beginning to hope for another rise in position, when suddenly a great black cloud swooped down on the Perrin Iron Works. I don't mean a real cloud, but a cloud of trouble. All the country felt its dark influence. Banks

stopped payment, merchants failed, stocks lost their value, no one knew what or whom to trust, and the wheels of industry everywhere were at a standstill. Among the rest the Perrin Company was forced to suspend work and discharge its hands. Tom was a trusted fellow, and so much in the confidence of his employers as to know for some time beforehand of the change that was coming. He stayed to the end, to help wind up books and put matters in order, and he and Mr. Perrin were the last persons to walk out of the big door.

"Good-bye, Tom," said Mr. Perrin, as he turned the key in the heavy lock, and stopped a moment to shake hands. "You 've done well by us, and if things are ever so that we can take another start, we 'll do well by you in our turn."

They shook hands, and Tom walked away with a month's wages in his pocket and no particular idea what to do next. Was he downhearted? Not at all. There was something somewhere that

he could do; that, he was sure of; and, although he looked grave, he whistled cheerily enough as he marched along.

Suddenly turning a corner, he ran upon Harry Blake, walking in a listless, dejected way, which at once caught his attention.

"Hallo — what 's up?" inquired Tom.

"Haven't you heard?" replied Harry, in a melancholy voice. "The Tiverton Bank has gone to smash with most of our money in it!"

"Your money!"

"My mother's. It 's the same thing exactly."

"Was it much? Is the bank gone for good?"

"Sure smash, they say, and seven-eighths of all we have."

Tom gave a whistle of dismay.

"Well, Harry, what next?" he demanded. "Have you thought of anything to do?"

"No. What *can* I do?" Harry's voice sounded hopeless enough.

What could Harry do? Tom, who had never

wasted a night's sleep over his own future, lay awake more than once debating this question. Hard times were hard times to him, as well as to everybody else, but he had a little money laid by, his habits were simple, and to pinch for a while cost him small suffering; besides, he could turn his hand to almost anything — but poor Harry? One plan after another suggested itself and was proposed, but each in turn proved a failure. Harry lacked bodily strength for one position, for another he had not the requisite training, still another was unsuited to his taste, and a fourth sounded so "ungenteel" that his mother would not listen to it. It would break her heart she said. Tom himself got a temporary place in a locomotive-shop, which tided him over the crisis, and enabled him to lend a helping hand, not to Harry only, but to one or two other old comrades whose families had lost everything and were in extremity. But these small aids were not enough. Permanent situations were

what were needed. At last Harry obtained a clerkship in a drug-store. He disliked it, and his mother hated it, but nothing better offered, and it is to his credit that he did the work well and diligently, and only relieved his mind by private grumblings to Towser in the evenings.

"I 'll tell you what," said Tom one night, after patiently listening to one of these lamentations, "you boys used to think my father strict with me when we were at school together, but I 've come to the conclusion that he was a wise man. Where should I be now if I 'd grown up soft and easily hurt, like you? Giving knocks and taking knocks — that 's what a business man's life is, and it 's a good thing to be toughened for it. I used to feel hard to my father about it too, sometimes, but I thank him heartily now," and he held out his brown, strong hand, and looked at it curiously and affectionately. Well he might. Those hands were keys to pick Fortune's locks

with, — only I 'm afraid Towser's mind was hardly up to such a notion.

"You 're right," said Harry, after thinking a little, "and your father was right. You 're true grit, Towser, — up to any work that comes along, and sure to succeed, while I 'm as easily knocked down as a girl. I only wish I 'd had a wise father, and been raised tough like you."

Harry has repeated this wish a good many times in the years that have passed since then. Life has gone hardly with him, and business has always been distasteful, but he has kept on steadily, and his position has improved, thanks to Tom's advice and help. Tom himself is a rich man now. He was long since taken in as a partner by the Perrin Company, which reopened its works the year after the panic, and is doing an immense business. He makes a sharp and energetic manager, but his open-handedness and open-heartedness grow with his growth, and prosperity only furnishes wider opportunity for a wise

kindness to those who are less fortunate. H
own good fortune he always ascribes to h
father's energetic training, and Mr. Kane, wh
is an elderly man now, likes to nod his head ar
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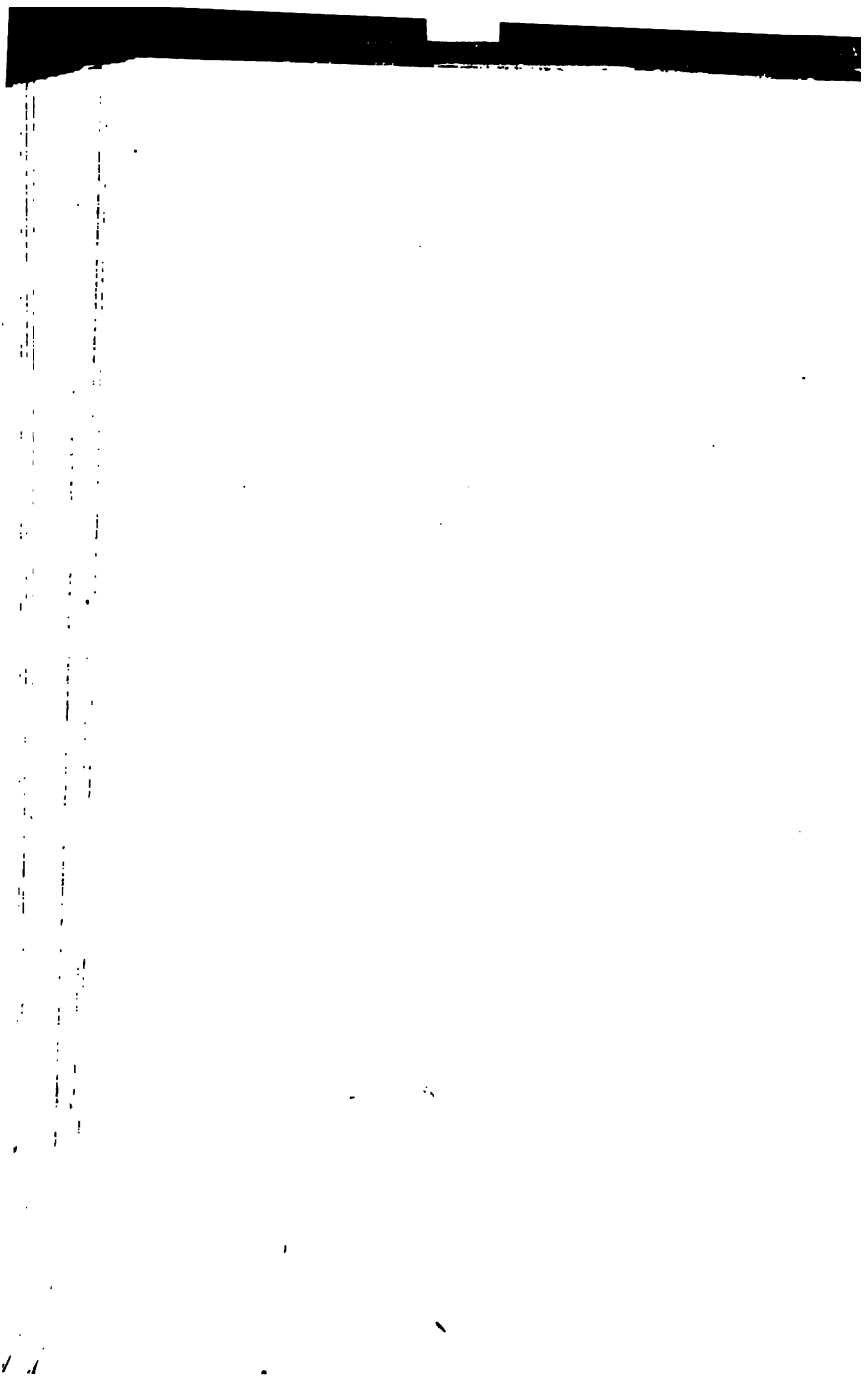
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